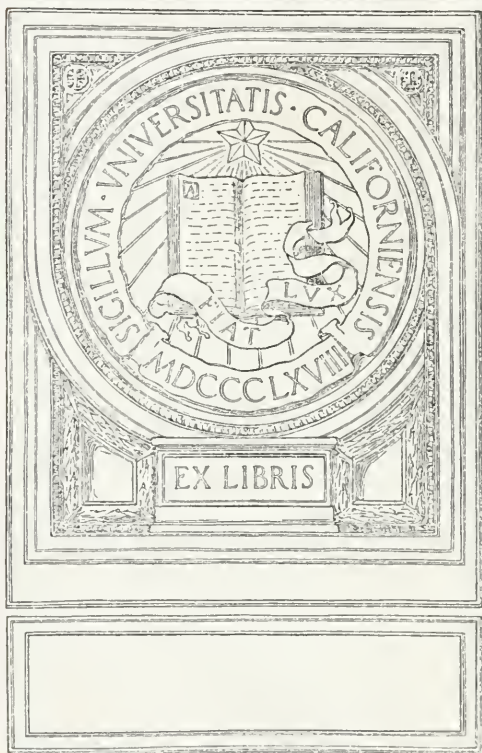




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THE CONVICT:

A Tale.

BY G. P. R. JAMES, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"THE SMUGGLER," "DARNLEY," "RICHELIEU,"

ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

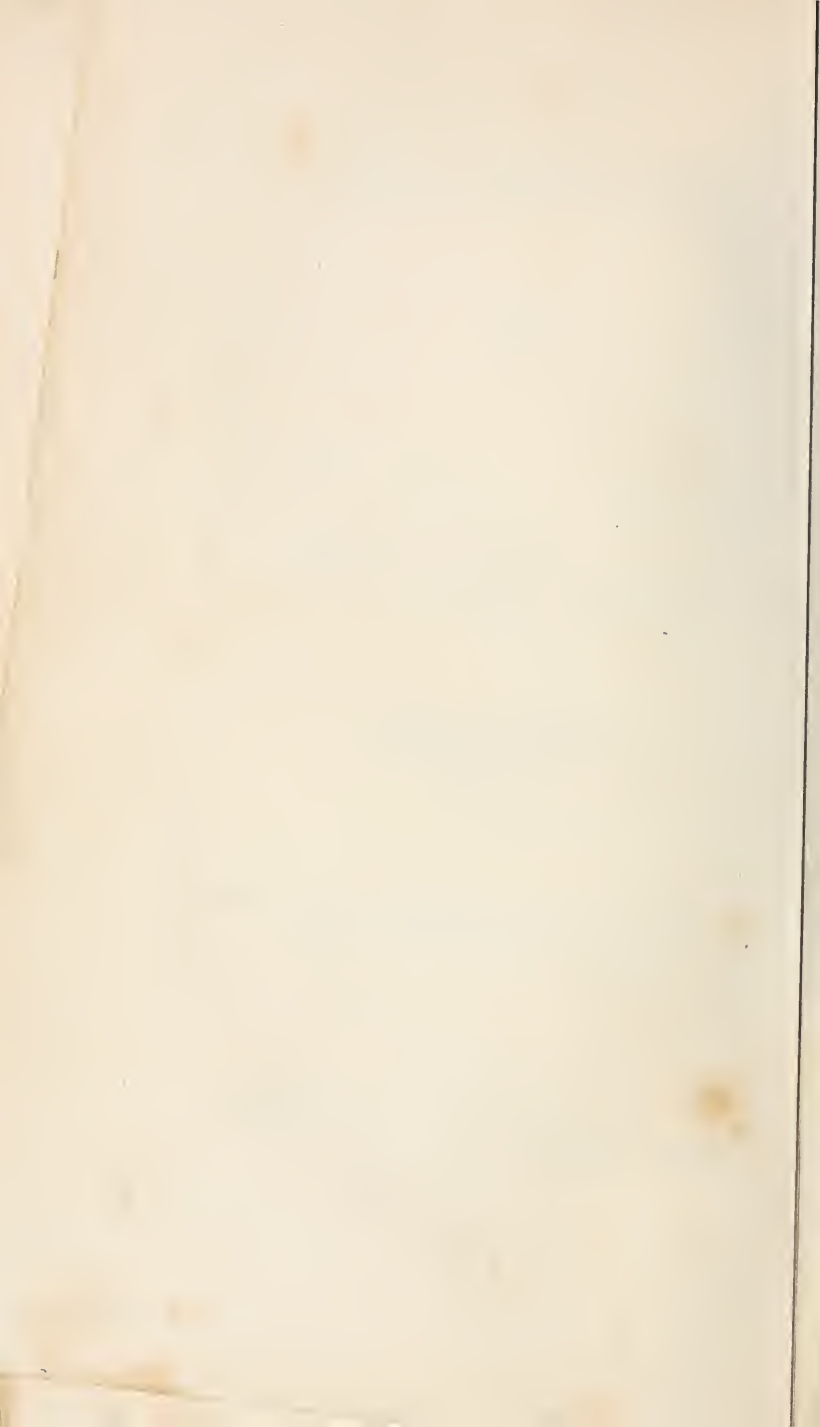
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THE CONVICT.

CHAPTER I.

THE night was dark but fine; and innumerable stars spangled the sky, as four men stood on watch by the side of a large old barn, within sight of a farm-house. Although a human habitation was there, the place had a desolate and solitary aspect. There was the farmstead, with its ricks and stacks, it is true, showing that industry was at work; but not another house was to be seen around except that yeoman's dwelling; not a labourer's cottage even; and the ground immediately around was uncul-

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tivated, and presented no homely and comfortable hedge-rows, no protection from the bleak winds which swept over the adjacent downs. Immediately round about the house, the ground, sloping hither and thither, was covered with short turf upon a sandy soil, which appeared in many a yellow patch and broken bank; and between two of the latter ran a good broad road, heavy to travel through with wain or cart. At the edge of this road, and not more than twenty or thirty yards from it, was the large, shapeless barn I have mentioned, the boarding broken off in several places, and the tiling in a very shattered condition. Between it and the road, upon the bank, which was not above three feet high, were seated the men, who, as I have stated, were placed on watch there; and it was evident that they listened, from time to time, for distant sounds, breaking off their low-toned conversation, and bending an attentive ear at the word "Hush!"

"They can't have got there yet, William,"

said one of them. "Remember, it is more than three miles."

"Ay, but they will go it quick," answered the other.

"That was at the first starting," replied the first. "Their march will be slower after a while. It is your impatience calculates your time and not your wit."

"I would rather be at work with them there," said another, "than lagging here, doing nothing."

"We have a post of more importance, and perhaps of more danger too," rejoined the second speaker. "The success of the whole may depend upon us.—Hark!—there is a foot-step! Perhaps it is the soldiers they talked of. Now jump down and stand to your arms, my lads. Remember—you, William, carry the intelligence at the first sight of them, while we hold them in parley as long as possible." And as he spoke, he jumped down into the road, first snatching up a musket that lay by his side.

Whoever or whatever it was they expected, only a single figure appeared, and as it came up the sandy path towards them, a voice shouted, "Stand! Give the word!"

"Justice," replied the clear, full voice of Mr. Dudley; and as he spoke, he continued to advance direct towards the men who barred the road.

"That's the word, sure enough," said one of them, in a low tone; "but he has got no arms, and does not look like our people."

"I dare say he is one of Sir Arthur's men," replied another; and after a momentary hesitation, they made way to let him pass. Dudley, however, paused in the midst of them, inquiring, in a familiar tone, "Which way have they taken?" and after hearing the reply of, "Straight on, you cannot miss it," he walked forward at the same rapid pace which had brought him thither.

For a little more than two miles farther, no sound or sight indicated that he was approaching the scene of any important event. The road was varied, sometimes passing over

a part of the bare downs, sometimes gliding in between little copses and hedge-rows, sometimes crossing over a shoulder of the hill, sometimes skirting its base. At length, however, a distant roar was heard, as of a multitude of human beings talking tumultuously; and coming out of the little valley, through which passed the bye-way he was pursuing, a strange and not unpicturesque scene burst upon his eyes. He was now at the foot of the steep ascent which led up to the old gates of the small town of Barhampton; and the decayed walls, with their flanking towers, were seen crowning the rise, at the distance of somewhat more than a quarter of a mile. I have said that they were seen, though the night was very dark, and the moon had not yet risen; but it was by a less mellow and peaceful light than that of the fair planet that the crumbling fortifications were displayed. More than a hundred links were blazing with their red and smoky glare around the gate and beneath the walls; and a sea of human

beings, moving to and fro, some on horseback and some on foot, was shown by the same fitful flames, with strange effects of light and shade, varying over them every moment as the groups themselves changed their forms, or the links were carried from place to place. At the same time, a dull, murmuring, subdued roar was heard, strong but not loud, as of many persons speaking eagerly; and every now and then a voice rose in a shout above the rest, as if giving directions or commands.

Without pausing even an instant to gaze upon the scene, however strange and interesting, Dudley hurried on up the ascent, sometimes running, sometimes walking, till he reached the outskirts of the mob, where a number of the less zealous and energetic were standing idly by, some with arms in their hands of various kinds and sorts—muskets, fowling-pieces, pikes, swords, scythes set upright upon poles, pistols and daggers, or large knives—some totally unarmed, like himself, or furnished merely with a

bludgeon. In advance was the denser part of the crowd—agitated, vociferous, swaying hither and thither, and seeming to attend but little to the commands which were shouted from time to time by several persons on horseback. The confusion was indescribable, and little could be seen of what was going on in front, though the light of the torches caught strong upon two or three banners, bearing inscriptions in gilt letters, and upon the figures of the horsemen who were raised above the crowd on foot. Towards one of these Mr. Dudley strove to force his way; but it was with difficulty that he gained, every moment or two, a step in advance, till at length he came suddenly, in the midst of the densest mass of the people, upon a brass six-pounder of somewhat antique form, with the two horses which had drawn it up the hill. There seemed to be another a little in advance; but seeing the space somewhat clear on the other side of the gun, Dudley leaped over it, and hurried on

more freely towards the figure upon which his eyes had been fixed, and which he recognised at once, though some attempt had been made to disguise the person. As he was passing the other field-piece, however, a man of foreign appearance, with a large pair of mustachios, stopped him rudely, telling him in French to keep back.

Dudley replied in the same language, "I must pass, sir. I wish to speak with that gentleman;" and, at the same time, he thrust aside the other, who was much less powerful than himself, and was approaching Sir Arthur Adelon, when suddenly a broad blaze broke up just under the arch of the old gateway, and a loud voice exclaimed, "That will soon burn them down."

The crowd recoiled a little, and Dudley for a moment caught sight of a huge pile of dry bushes which had been placed against the old gates, and lighted by some gunpowder. The next instant he was by Sir Arthur's side, and then for the first time

saw, a little in advance of the baronet, the lawyer Norries, apparently acting as the leader of the multitude, and at that moment giving directions for bringing round the muzzles of the field-pieces to bear upon the gates as soon as they should be destroyed by the flames.

The tumult and uproar were so great that Sir Arthur neither saw nor heard Dudley, till the latter had spoken to him three times, and then, when he turned his eyes upon him, he started and became very pale.

“ Sir Arthur, listen to me for a moment,” said Dudley; “ bend down your head, and hear what I have to say.”

The baronet, seemingly by an involuntary movement, did as he was required; and Dudley continued, in a low voice, saying, “ Take the first opportunity of turning your horse and riding away; and be sure——”

“ Impossible, sir, impossible !” answered Sir Arthur, in the same tone.

“ And be sure,” continued Dudley, without heeding his reply, “ that if you do not, you will

have bitter cause to regret it. Listen to me yet one moment, sir, before you answer."

"There is a part of the gate down!" cried the loud voice of Norries. "Bring those cannon round quicker—have you lost your hands and arms?"

"Sir Arthur Adelon," continued Dudley, earnestly, "I was asked a question by those who sent me, and to it I gave a willing reply. In accordance with that reply I was directed to say to you, I have heard that some papers will be given up to me in a few days affecting questions long past; but I say at once I wish all those gone-by affairs to be buried in oblivion, and if you will retire at once from this scene of treasonable violence, I give you my word that when those papers are given to me, I will destroy them without looking at them."

"Then he has betrayed me!" murmured Sir Arthur, with a furious look towards Norries; "he has forced me forward into these deeds, and then betrayed me. But it is too late," he

added, aloud, for the preceding words, though they were caught by Dudley, had been uttered in a very low tone. "I know not what you speak of, sir. If you have come here to put forth enigmas, I am too busy to unriddle them. It matters not to me whether you look at papers or not. That is all your own affair." And breaking off abruptly, he again gazed gloomily at Norries, and muttered something between his teeth, of which Dudley only heard the word, "Revenge."

There were two holsters at his saddle-bow, such are as commonly used in some of our volunteer regiments of cavalry; and as he spoke, Sir Arthur Adelon put his right hand to one of them, while he turned his horse with the other. But Dudley grasped his bridle rein, saying, "One word more, Sir Arthur, and then I must go. You are in great danger," he added, in a lower voice. "Not only are there troops within the town, but in five minutes you will have the yeomanry upon you. So much have

I learned this day. Be advised, for your own sake, for the sake of your family. Turn your horse, disentangle yourself from the crowd, and make the best of your way back to Brandon."

Sir Arthur gazed at him with a look of stupified astonishment; but ere he could answer, a voice shouted, "The gate's down!—the gate's down!" And immediately a rush forward took place, beginning with those behind, who heard the announcement without seeing what was going on in front.

"Orderly, orderly!" cried Norries; "let the guns advance first." But as he spoke, there was a loud ringing peal of musketry from the inner side of the gateway, and then a straggling shot or two. A man amongst the rioters dropped; another staggered, pressing his hand upon his side, and fell; and the horse which Norries was riding reared high, and then came thundering down.

At the same instant there came the sound of a wild "Hurrah!" from the side of the hill to

the left, together with that of galloping horse. Another volley of shot rang from behind the gateway of the town; and then, with a cheer, a small but compact body of infantry advanced at the charge with fixed bayonets from within the walls. Two more of the rioters had fallen by the second discharge; the cry spread amongst them that the cavalry were upon them; those at the extreme verge of the crowd began to run; the centre remained firm for a moment, more from indecision than courage; but the next instant, panic seized all, and one general scene of flight and confusion followed.

Dudley caught one more glance of Sir Arthur Adelon, but it was only to see that he was spurring the fine horse he rode fiercely along the slope towards the other side from that which now presented the advancing line of a well-disciplined body of yeomanry cavalry.

It was now time that Dudley should think of his own safety. He was in the midst of a body of rioters, whose acts amounted to treason, though a more lenient construction was

afterwards put upon them, under the merciful influence of modern civilization. With quick step, then, but not at a run, he turned somewhat in the direction which had been taken by Sir Arthur Adelon, skirted round the town to the westward, and when he had got in amongst some houses which had been built beyond the walls, turned back, as if coming towards the scene of affray.

The great mass of the people had fled down the hill towards the villages and copses in the interior; and it must be said that the yeomanry, inexperienced in such proceedings, made but few prisoners, considering the number of people present at the attack upon the town. A confused noise, however, reached Dudley's ears, of galloping horse, and shouts and cries; but, keeping away to the right, he avoided the spot where the pursuit was going on, and at the same time endeavoured to regain the road which led towards Brandon. He was some time in finding it, and even when

actually upon it, did not feel sure that he was right, till he perceived, after having gone on for a quarter of a mile, a tall finger-post, of a peculiar form, which he had remarked as he passed before.

The road was quite solitary, although he thought he heard steps running on fast before him ; and no one did Dudley meet with during the whole weary seven miles he had still to walk before he reached the gates of Brandon Park. Sad and gloomy were the thoughts which kept him company by the way from that scene of mad violence. He reflected upon the fate of the misled men who had fallen or been taken ; and with still more sorrowful feelings he thought of the future condition of the widow, the orphans, the parents of the dead, and all that were connected with or dependent upon the prisoners. But it is with his own fate I have to do, and not with his mere meditations, and therefore I will conduct him at once past the old barn and lonely farm-house, which

marked about half the distance, and bring him to the gates of the park. The moon was by this time rising, but the light of a candle was in the lodge, and the small door leading into the park, at the side of the greater ones, was open. Dudley passed through, and advanced up the avenue towards the house ; but he had not proceeded two hundred yards, when two men started out upon him from behind the trees, and seized him by the shoulder.

“ Mr. Edward Dudley,” said one, “ I apprehend you in the Queen’s name. Here is the warrant.”

“ Upon what charge ?” demanded Dudley, without making any resistance.

“ Why, it may be murder ; it may be manslaughter,” replied the constable ; “ that remains to be seen. You must come to the lodge for to-night, sir ; for I am ordered to keep you there in safe custody, in the little room with the round window at the back.”

CHAPTER II.

It is necessary now to leave Dudley in the hands of the constables, and to take up the history of another personage in the tale.

Sir Arthur Adelon spurred on for four miles without drawing a rein, and almost without giving a thought to any point in his situation, except the effort necessary to escape personal danger. For the first two miles he fancied that he heard the sounds of pursuit behind him; but gradually, as no one appeared, and his keenest attention did not confirm the impressions which fear had produced, he became convinced that he had escaped in-

mediate capture ; and while he still urged his horse furiously forward, he meditated over the perilous future. His course was directed along a narrow horse-path across the downs, with every turning of which he was well acquainted, but which added nearly two miles to the distance he had to go. He paid little attention to any external objects ; but one thing could not escape his eye as he rode over the high grounds towering above the sea. It was a dim light, at the distance of about a mile from the shore, and he knew right well that it was burning on board a small French brig, which had brought over the two field-pieces the night before. The sight suggested to his mind the idea of flight from England ; but there were many difficult and dangerous points to be considered before such a step could be taken ; and after awhile, he somewhat checked his horse's speed, and though still proceeding at a quick trot, revolved, in an intense but confused and rambling

manner, the circumstances which surrounded him. His inclination was certainly to fly; but then he remembered that to do so would fix upon him participation in the crimes of that night; that he might not be able to return to his country for long years, and that the rest of his life might be spent in the pains of exile. He recollected, too, that he had held back at that period of the attack upon the town of Barhampton, when the magistrates had appeared upon the wall, and summoned the multitude to disperse, and retire quietly to their homes; and he fancied that, disguised as his person had been, in a large wrapping cloak, with a handkerchief tied over the lower part of his face, and a hat unlike that which he usually wore, he might have escaped without observation on the part of most of the rioters. But then again Dudley had seen him, spoken to him, recognised him. He was the only one, except Norries, that was fully aware of his presence on the spot; and Sir Arthur

believed that he had seen the latter fall dead under the fire of the troops. Could Dudley be silenced, all might go well; but still the baronet hesitated and balanced, and remained undecided till the gates of Brandon Park appeared before him. It was necessary to come to some immediate decision; and yet he could not make up his mind to decide; and at length he determined, as most men in a state of doubt are inclined to do, to cast the burden upon another. "I will speak with Filmer," he thought; "and upon his advice I will act." The gates were immediately opened on his ringing the bell—for the tenants of the lodge, knowing that he was absent, had waited up for his return—and riding hard up the avenue, Sir Arthur entered his niece's house a little after eleven o'clock. A momentary hesitation crossed him when he was passing the threshold, as to whether he should consult with Father Peter or not; but that doubt was immediately put an end to, by the first words of the butler, who

stood behind the servant that opened the door.

“Oh! Sir Arthur,” he said, with a very grave face, “some terrible things have happened——”

“I know—I know,” cried Sir Arthur, interrupting him hastily, and somewhat surprised to find that the tidings had travelled so quick. “Where is Mr. Filmer? I must see him directly. Call him to me immediately.”

“He is in the library, sir,” replied the man; and passing on with a quick step, Sir Arthur Adelon entered the room where the priest was seated alone. Father Filmer was sitting at the large library-table, with his head resting on his hand; and as he raised his eyes to the baronet’s countenance, with the light of the large lamp streaming upon his broad forehead, there was an expression of intense, stern thought upon his face, which made Sir Arthur feel he was in the presence of his master more than of his friend perhaps. He closed the door,

and saw that it was firmly shut ; and as he was advancing towards the table, Mr. Filmer inquired, " What is the matter, Sir Arthur ? You are pale, haggard, and apparently much agitated."

" Have you not heard, my good father ?" asked the baronet. " I had understood that the rumour had reached Brandon."

" I have heard much," replied the priest ; " but what I wish to hear is, what it is that has so much affected you. My son," he continued, rising, and gazing gravely upon Sir Arthur's face, " if you would have comfort, consolation, and advice from one who is your old and long-tried friend, as well as your spiritual guide, you must have confidence in him. Now, in that confidence you have been wanting lately. You have told me half, and I have known the whole. You have avoided rather than sought my counsel ; and I have not forced it upon you, although I knew you to be engaged in enterprises dangerous to yourself and others,

and knew also the inducements which forced you forwards, and from which I could have relieved you, if you would but have been guided by me. The only thing of which I was unaware was, that the rash attempt was to be made to-night. I see by your face, by your dress, by your manner, that it has been so; and I now ask you the result, not from any idle curiosity, but for the purpose of delivering you from the difficulties which your own want of confidence has brought upon you. Speak; and every word that you say shall be held as sacred as if uttered under the seal of confession."

"The result, my best friend," replied Sir Arthur, "is more disastrous than can be conceived." And he went on to give his own version of all that had occurred, dwelling particularly upon Dudley's appearance amongst the rioters, and the words which he had used. Filmer suffered him to proceed to an end without a single question. He did not even em-

barrass him by a look, but having resumed his seat, kept his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the table, and his head slightly bent, in listening attention.

“And now what am I to do?” asked Sir Arthur. “I will be guided entirely by your advice. There is the French brig which has been hired by some of these men, through the *Société Démocratique*, now lying off the coast. A boat will carry me on board in half an hour, and I shall be safe in France, as fugitives accused of mere political offences cannot be claimed.”

“Would you ruin yourself for ever?” asked Father Filmer; “would you put a brand upon your name which can never be effaced? Think not of it; merely answer me one or two questions. Are you sure that Norries is dead?”

“I saw him fall with my own eyes,” answered the baronet; “and I think that one of the cannon passed over him, for the horses took fright at the firing.”

“Norries would not betray you, I think,” said Mr. Filmer, thoughtfully; and then repeated, “he would not betray you, even if he were living, I do believe.”

“But he has betrayed me to this young Dudley already,” answered Sir Arthur Adelon, sharply. “His words clearly showed that he is informed of all that passed six years ago. He, the son of my greatest enemy, has me now entirely in his power—it is that which makes it so necessary to fly; he saw me, spoke to me, can swear to my presence there.”

“But he, you think, is the only one?” said the priest, in a tone of inquiry.

“Assuredly,” replied Sir Arthur. “I have been at only two of their meetings; and at the last I strongly dissuaded them from the attempt, and said that I would take no part in it, which was the cause of Norries’ threatening visit here. All my other communications have been carried on with him.”

“Then you are safe,” said the priest. “If

any one has by chance recognised your person, it may easily be said, that you were there to dissuade the people from their rash attempt; and you can call witnesses to prove that you have done so before."

"But Dudley, Dudley," said the baronet, almost impatiently—"he can prove all."

"I will provide for him," replied the priest, with a marked emphasis and a bitter smile. "He shall be taken care of."

"But how—how?" cried Sir Arthur.

"Come with me, and I will show you," answered Mr. Filmer; and lighting a taper at the lamp, he led the way into the hall. Sir Arthur followed, in wonder and doubt, and the priest opened the door of the dining-room, and went in. As soon as Sir Arthur entered, his eyes fell upon the dining-room table, which was covered with a white cloth, concealing from the eye some large object like the figure of a man. Mr. Filmer set down the light he carried on the side-board, where two

other wax-candles were burning; and then, with a slow, firm step, and grave countenance, approached the end of the table, and threw back the cloth. Sir Arthur had followed him step by step, but what was his horror and surprise to see, when the covering was removed, the cold, inanimate features of Lord Hadley, with his forehead and head covered with blood, and his clothes likewise stained with gore and dust.

“Good Heaven !” he exclaimed, “how has this happened, and how does this bear upon my own fate ?”

“How it has happened,” answered Mr. Filmer, “remains to be proved, and shall be proved; and how it bears upon your fate, I will leave you to divine, at least for the present. That unhappy young man had a sharp and angry discussion this morning with Mr. Dudley. The subject was Helen Clive, whom he who lies there was pursuing with the basest intentions, and insulting with familiarities as

well as importunities, alike repugnant to one of so high a mind. The dispute proceeded to very fierce and angry menaces on both parts. Dudley forgot his usual moderation, and the sharp terms he used were overheard by myself and two others. At dinner they were cold and repulsive towards each other; and after dinner, towards eight o'clock, Mr. Dudley left the house, upon what errand I do not know. That unhappy young man followed him, inquiring which way the other took, and I find that they were seen passing the lodge, and going up towards the downs. At that time they were in eager conversation; their gestures were warm, and their tones indicative of much excitement, though the words they uttered were not heard. Somewhat more than two hours ago, the boatmen—fishermen or smugglers, as the case may be—brought home that lifeless mass of clay, with the vital spark even then quite extinct. The account they gave was this:—that one of their number, while watching a French brig

lying about a mile from the shore, heard high words from the cliff above his head. He thought he heard a cry, too, as if for help, and looking up, he saw two men at the very edge of the precipice, though in the darkness he could but distinguish the bare outline of their forms against the sky. There seemed to him to be blows struck and a scuffle between them, and the moment after, one disappeared, for the dark face of the rock prevented his fall from being seen; but a loud cry, almost a shriek, he said, and then the sound of a heavy fall and a deadly groan, called him to the spot, where he found this youth lying weltering in his blood."

The priest paused for a moment or two, while Sir Arthur Adelon approached nearer and bent down his head over the dead body; and then Mr. Filmer, with a significant look, continued. "Mr. Dudley will have occupation enough. There is no other wound," added the priest, observing that Sir Arthur was still looking close at the corpse, "but that occasioned by

the fall. The skull is fractured, the right thigh broken, the brain severely injured. Death must have been very speedy, though he was still living when the fishermen found him, but never uttered a word. Now, my son, the consequences of this act are important to you."

"But was it Dudley who killed him?" asked the baronet, with an eager look. "I cannot think it; and my good, kind friend, I cannot wish to bring his blood upon my head, were it even to spare my own. The events of this night," he continued, taking the priest's hands in his and pressing them tight, "have given me strange feelings, Filmer. I have seen men die, if not in consequence of my act, at least in consequence of acts in which I participated, and I cannot, I will not, even to save my own life, bring a farther weight upon my conscience."

"For whatever you do in this case," answered Filmer, "the church has power to absolve you, and for much more than I intend you should

do. This Dudley is an obstinate heretic, who has had the means of light, and has refused it; and although it is necessary now, from the circumstances of the times, to refrain from exercising that just rigour which in better and more spiritual days was displayed to every impenitent person in his situation, yet, of course, we cannot look upon him with the same feelings, or find ourselves bound to him by the same ties, which would exist between us and a Catholic Christian. Body and soul he is given over to reprobation; and we have no need to go out of our way to shelter him in any degree from the laws of his own heretic land—a land which for centuries has given the true faith up to persecution and injustice of every kind. Let him take his chance. I ask you to do nothing more. The evidence is very strong against him. No other person was seen near this unfortunate young man. But a very short time could have elapsed after they were remarked together, apparently in high dispute, before this fatal

occurrence took place. Other evidence may appear, and he may be proved guilty or innocent; but, at all events, he must be tried, and the time of that trial may be yet remote. The first cases that will be taken will certainly be those connected with these riots, and the only direct witness against you will be then in gaol."

"But how am I to act in this business?" demanded Sir Arthur Adelon. "As a magistrate, as the person in whose house both the dead man and the living were staying, I shall continually be called upon to share in the different proceedings, and my part will be a terribly difficult one to play, my friend."

"Not in the least," answered Filmer. "You must refuse to act as a magistrate, even should you be called upon, alleging your acquaintance with both parties, and your natural partiality for Mr. Dudley, on account of old friendship between his father and yourself, as sufficient excuses. Whatever evidence you give may be

highly favourable to the accused person. The testimony against him will be strong enough, rest assured of that."

"Then do you really think him guilty?" demanded the baronet, gazing at the priest, with those doubts which a long acquaintance with his character had impressed even upon the mind of a man not very acute.

"Nay, I do not prejudge the question," replied Filmer. "As yet, we have not sufficient grounds to go upon. All I say is, the case of suspicion is very strong; and what I would advise you to do, under any circumstances, would be, to send immediately for your nearest neighbour, Mr. Conway, turn over the case to him, and let him judge whether it be not necessary instantly to issue a warrant for the apprehension of Mr. Dudley, when he returns. It were better that not a moment were lost, for although you have probably ridden fast, it cannot be long ere the person we suspect is here."

“Perhaps he may not return at all,” said Sir Arthur. “It is more than probable that, on foot and unarmed, he has been apprehended as one of the rioters—but we can send, at all events.” And ringing the bell sharply, he gave the necessary orders.

“But now,” continued the baronet, reverting to the topic of greatest interest in his own mind, as soon as the servant had left the room, “how am I to act in regard to this attack upon Barhampton?”

“We must see,” replied the priest. “Should Norries be dead, or have made his escape, you must assume a degree of boldness; acknowledge that your views are the same in regard to general principles as those of the unfortunate men implicated; but declare openly that you have always opposed any recourse to physical force in the assertion of any political opinions whatever, and bring forward witnesses to prove that you attempted to dissuade them from all violence, refusing to take any part therein.

That will be easily done ; and should any one come forward to state that you were present at the attack, you can show that you went thither on hearing that it was about to take place, in order to constrain them to refrain from executing their intentions by every means in your power."

" But how can I show that ?" demanded Sir Arthur.

" We will find a way," replied Filmer ; " but that can be discussed to-morrow. I must now go out to console some of my little flock who are suffering from affliction. In the meantime you must manage this examination. The witnesses are the old man at the lodge, your butler, the head footman, Brown, and the fishermen who are now waiting in the servants' hall."

As he spoke, he moved towards the door. Sir Arthur would fain have detained him a moment to ask farther questions, but Filmer laid his hand upon his arm, saying, " Be firm, be firm !" and left him.

CHAPTER III.

AT the distance of about a quarter of a mile from Clive Grange, was a group of six or seven cottages, of neat and comfortable appearance, tenanted by labourers on Mr. Clive's own farm. They were all respectable, hard-working people; and as Clive himself was not without his prejudices, especially upon religious matters, he had contrived that most of those whom he employed should be Roman Catholics. As there were not many of that church in the part of the country where he lived, some of these men had come from a distance. He would not, indeed, refuse a good workman and a man of high character on

account of his being a Protestant, but he had a natural preference for persons of his own views, and, all things equal, chose them rather than any others. This preference was known far and wide; and consequently, when any of his distant friends wished to recommend an honest man of the Romish creed to employment, where they were certain to be well treated, they wrote to Mr. Clive, so that he had rarely any difficulty in suiting himself.

In one of these cottages, at a much later hour than usual, a light was burning, on the night of which I have been speaking; and within, over the smouldering embers of a small wood fire, sat a tall man of the middle age, with a peculiar deep-set blue eye, fringed with dark lashes, which is very frequently to be found amongst the Milesian race. His figure was bent, and his hands stretched out over the smouldering hearth to gain any little heat that it gave out; and as he thus sat, his eyes were bent upon the red sparks amongst

the white ashes, with a grave, contemplative gaze. He seemed dull, and somewhat melancholy, and from time to time muttered a few words to himself with the peculiar tone of his countrymen.

“Ay-e!” he said, as something struck him in the half-extinguished fire—“that one’s gone out too. If the priest stays much longer, they’ll all be out, one after the other. Well, it’s little for that matter; we must all go out some time or another, and very often when we think we are burning brightest. That young lad, now, I dare say, when he went out for his walk, never fancied his neck would be broke before he came home again. Sorrow a bit!—He got what he deserved anyhow, and I’d ha’ done it for him if the master hadn’t—Hist!—That must be the priest’s step, coming down the hill. He is the only man likely to be out so late in this country, and going with such a slow step, though the lads are having a bit of a shindy to-night, they tell me.”

The next moment the latch was lifted, the door opened, and Mr. Filmer walked in. The labourer instantly rose, and placed a wooden chair for his pastor by the side of the fire, saying, "Good night, your reverence. It's mighty cold this afternoon."

"I don't find it so, Dan," answered Filmer; "but I dare say you do, sitting all alone here, with but a little spark like that. I was afraid you would get tired of waiting, and go to bed. I am much obliged to you for sitting up as I told you."

"Oh, in course I did as your reverence said," answered Daniel Connor. "I always obey my priest."

"That's right, Dan," answered Mr. Filmer. "Now I have come to tell you what I want you to do, like a good lad."

"Anything your reverence says, I am quite ready to do," replied the Irishman. "I kept the matter quite quiet as you said, and not a bare word about it passed my lips to any of the

servants, for I am not going to say anything that can hurt the master, for a better never lived than he."

"No, Dan," answered the priest; "but I'll tell you what you must do—you must say a word or two to serve him." And Filmer fixed his eyes keenly upon the man's face, which brightened up in a moment with a very shrewd and merry smile, as he replied, "That I'll do with all my heart, your reverence. It's but the telling me what to say, and I'll say it."

"Well then, you see, Dan," continued Filmer, "this is likely to be a bad business for Mr. Clive, if we do not manage very skilfully. He is somewhat obstinate himself, and might with difficulty be persuaded to take the line of defence we want, and which indeed is necessary to his own safety. Now, the first thing that will take place here is the coroner's inquest."

"Ay! I suppose so," said Connor; "but they shan't get anything out of me there, I can answer for it. I can be as blind as a mole when I like, and as deaf too."

“But you must be somewhat more, Dan,” was the priest’s reply. “You see, if suspicion fixes to no one, and the jury bring in a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown, the magistrates will never leave inquiring into the matter till they fix it upon your poor master. What we must do, must be to turn the first suspicions upon some one else, so as to keep Mr. Clive free of them altogether, and then he will be safe enough.”

“Wont that be something very like murder, your reverence?” asked Connor, abruptly, with a very grave face. “I never did the like of that, and I think it’s a sin, is it not?”

“The sin be upon me,” answered Filmer, sternly. “Cannot I absolve you, Daniel Connor, for that which I bid you do? Are *you* going to turn heretic too? Do you doubt that the church has power to absolve you from your sins, or that where she points out the course to you, the end does not justify the means?”

“Oh, no! the blessed saints forbid!” exclaimed Connor, eagerly. “I don’t doubt a word

of it ; I am quite sure your reverence is right ; I was only just asking you, like."

"Oh! if that's all," answered Mr. Filmer, "and you are not beginning to feel scandalous doubts from living so long amongst a number of heretics all about, I will answer your question plainly. It is not at all like murder, nor will there be any sin in it. The person who is likely to be suspected, will be able easily to clear himself in the end ; so that he runs no risk of anything but a short imprisonment, which may perhaps turn to the good of his soul, for I shall not fail to visit him, and show him the way to the true light. But in the meantime, Mr. Clive will be saved from all danger ; and if you look at the matter as a true son of the church, you will see that there is no choice between a believer like Mr. Clive, and an obstinate heretic and unbeliever like this other man."

"Oh! if it is a heretic!" exclaimed Connor, with a laugh, "that quite alters the matter; I didn't know he was a heretic."

“ You do not suppose, I hope,” replied Mr. Filmer, “ that I would have proposed such a thing if he was not. All my children are equally dear to me, be they high or low, and I would not peril one to save another.”

“ Well, your reverence, I am quite ready to do whatever you say,” answered Connor; “ and if you just give me a thought of the right way, I’ll walk along it as straight as a line.”

“ The case is this, then,” rejoined the priest ; “ there was a quarrel between this young lord and a Mr. Dudley, which went on more or less through the whole of this day. Dudley went out about eight o’clock, and Lord Hadley followed him, and overtook him, and they went on quarrelling by the way. Very soon after that the young lord met with his death. Now, men will naturally think that Mr. Dudley killed him, for no one but you and your master and Miss Clive saw him after, till he was speechless. What you must do, then, is this :—when you hear that the coroner’s inquest is sitting,

you must come up and offer to give evidence; and you must tell them exactly where you were standing when the young lord came up to the top of the cliff; and then you must say that you saw a man come up to him, and a quarrel take place, and two or three blows struck, and the unhappy lad pitched over the cliff."

"And not a word about Miss Helen?" said the man.

"Not a word," answered Filmer. "Keep yourself solely to the fact of having seen a man of gentlemanly appearance——"

"Oh! he is a gentleman, every inch of him," exclaimed Connor. "No doubt about that, your reverence."

"So you can state," continued the priest; "but take care not to enter too much into detail. Say you saw him but indistinctly."

"That's true enough," cried the labourer; "for it was a darkish night, and I was low down in the glen and he high up on the side

of the hill, so that I caught but a glimmer of him, as it were. But it was the master, notwithstanding — that I am quite sure of, or else the devil in his likeness. But, by the blessed saints, I do not think it could be the devil either, for he did what any man would have done in his place, and what I should have done in another minute if he hadn't come up, for I would not have stood by to see the young lady ill-treated, nohow."

"Doubtless not," answered the priest; "and it would be hard that the life of such a man should be sacrificed for merely defending his own child."

"Oh, no! that shall never be," answered Connor, "if my word can stop it; and so, father," he continued, with a shrewd look, "I suppose that the best thing I can do is, if I am asked any questions, to say that I didn't rightly see the gentleman that did it; but that he looked like a real gentleman, and may be about the height of this Mr. Dudley. I saw him

twice at the farmhouse, and if he is in the room, I can point him out as being about the tallness of the man I saw; and that's not a lie either, for they are much alike, in length, at least. Neither one nor the other stands much under six feet. I'd better not swear to him, however, for that would be bad work."

"By no means," answered the priest. "Keep to mere general facts; that can but cause suspicion. I wish not to injure the young man, but merely to turn suspicion upon him rather than Mr. Clive; and by so doing, to give even Mr. Dudley himself a sort of involuntary penance, which may soften an obdurate heart towards the church which his fathers foolishly abandoned, and leave him one more chance of salvation, if he chooses to accept of it. It is a hard thing, Daniel Connor, to remain for many thousands of years in the flames of purgatory, where every moment is marked and prolonged by torture indescribable, instead of entering into eternal beatitude, where all sense of time

is lost in inexpressible joy from everlasting to everlasting; but it is a still harder thing to be doomed in hell to eternal punishment, where the whole wrath and indignation of God is poured out upon the head of the unrepenting and the obstinate for ever and ever."

"It is mighty hard, indeed," answered the labourer, making the sign of the cross. "The Blessed Virgin keep us all from such luck as that."

"It is from that I wish to save him," rejoined Mr. Filmer; "but his heart must first be humbled, for you know very well, Daniel, that pride is the source of unbelief in the minds of all these heretics. They judge their own opinions to be far better than the dogmas of the church, the decisions of councils, or the exposition of the fathers; and by the same sin which caused the fall of the angels, they have also fallen from the faith. Let no true son of the church follow their bad example; but knowing that all things are a matter of faith, and

that the church is the interpreter mentioned in Scripture, submit their human and fallible reason implicitly to that high and holy authority which is vested in the successor of the Apostle and the Councils of the Church, where they will find the only infallible guide."

"Oh! but I'll do that, certainly," replied Connor, eagerly; and yet a shade of doubt seemed to hang upon him, for he added, the moment after, "But you know, your reverence, that when they swear me they will make me swear to tell the whole truth, and if I do not say that I know it was Mr. Clive, it will be false swearing."

"Heed not that," answered Filmer, with a frown. "Have I not told you I will absolve you, and do absolve you? Besides, how can you swear to that which you only believe, but do not exactly know. You told me this evening, up at the hall, that you did not see your master's face when he struck the blow."

"Ah! but I saw his face well enough when he was going up," replied the labourer.

"That does not prove that he was the same who did the deed," said Filmer. "Another might have suddenly come there, without your perceiving how."

"He was mighty like the master, any how," said the man, in a low tone; "but I'll say just what your reverence bids me."

"Do so," answered Filmer, turning to leave the cottage; "the church speaks by my voice; and accursed be all who disobey her!"

The stern earnestness with which he spoke; the undoubting confidence which his words and looks displayed in his power, as a priest of that church which pretends to hold the ultimate fate of all beings in its hands; his own apparent faith in that vast and blasphemous pretension; had their full effect upon his auditor, who, though a good man, a shrewd man, and not altogether an unenlightened man,

had sucked in such doctrines with his mother's milk, so that they became, as it were, a part of his very nature. "To be sure I will obey," said Connor; "it is no sin of mine if any harm comes of it. That's the priest's affair, any how." And he retired to his bed.

CHAPTER IV.

FATHER PETER turned away to the right, and walked on; for he had yet work to do, and a somewhat different part to play before the night was done. The versatility of the genius of the Roman church is one of its most dangerous qualities. The principle, that the end justifies the means, makes it seem right, to those who hold such a doctrine, to "be all things to all men," in a very different sense from that of the apostle. Five minutes brought Mr. Filmer to the door of the Grange, and he looked over that side of the house for a light, but in vain. One of the large dogs came and

fawned upon him, and all the rest were silent ; for it is wonderful how soon and easily he accustomed all creatures to his influence. His slow, quiet, yet firm footfall was known amongst those animals as well as their master's or Edgar Adelon's, and at two or three hundred yards they had recognised it.

After a moment's consideration, Filmer rang the bell gently, and the next instant Clive himself appeared with a light in his hand. He was fully dressed, and his face was grave and composed. "Ah, father," he said, as soon as he perceived who his visitor was, "this is kind of you. Come in. Helen has not gone to bed yet."

"I am glad to hear it, my son," replied Filmer, "for I want to speak a few words with you both." Thus saying, he walked on before Mr. Clive into the room where Helen Clive usually sat. He found her with her eyes no longer tearful, but red with weeping ; and seating himself with a kindly manner beside her,

he said, "Grieve not, my dear child, whatever has happened. There is consolation for all who believe."

"But you know not yet, father, what has happened," answered Helen, with a glance at her father: "you will know soon, however."

"I do know what has happened, Helen," said the priest; "though not all the particulars; and I have come down at once to give you comfort and advice. Tell me, my son, how did this sad event occur?"

"It is soon rumoured, it would seem, then," observed Clive, in a gloomy tone. "I told you, Helen, that concealment was hopeless, though we thought no eye saw it but our own, and that of Him who saw all, and would judge the provocation as well as the punishment."

"Concealment is not hopeless, my son," replied Filmer, "if concealment should be needful, as I fear it is. Only one person saw you, and he came at once to tell me, and bring me down to comfort you; for he is a faithful

child of our holy mother the church, and will betray no man. But tell me all, Clive.—Am I not your friend as well as your pastor?”

“Tell him, Helen—tell the good father,” said Clive, seating himself at the table, and leaning his head upon his hand. “I have no heart to speak of it.”

The priest turned his eyes to Helen, who immediately took up the tale which her father was unwilling to tell. “I believe I am myself to blame,” she said, in a low, sweet tone; “though God knows I thought not of what would follow when I went out. But I must tell you why I did so. My father and I had been talking all the evening of the wild and troubled state of the country, and of what was likely to take place at Barhampton to-night.”

“It has taken place,” replied Father Filmer; “the magistrates were prepared for the rioters; the troops have been in amongst the people, and many a precious life has been lost.”

“It was what we feared,” continued Helen, sadly. “Alas! that men will do such wild and lawless things. But about that very tumult my father was anxious and uneasy, and towards half-past six he went out to see if he could meet my uncle Norries as he went, and at all events to look out from the top of the downs towards Barhampton. He promised me that he would on no account go farther than the old wall, and that he would be back in half an hour. But more than an hour passed, and I grew frightened, till at last I sent up Daniel Connor to see if he could find my father. He seemed long, though perhaps he was not, and I then resolved to go myself. I had no fear at all; for I had never heard of Lord Hadley being out at night, and I thought he would be at the dinner-table, and I quite safe—safer, indeed, than in the day. I was only anxious for my father, and for him I was very anxious. However, I walked on fast, and soon came to the downs, but I could see no

one, and taking the slanting path up the slope, I came just to the edge of the cliff, and looked out over the sea to Barhampton Head. There was nothing to be seen there, and only a light in a ship at sea. That made me more frightened than ever, for I had felt sure that I should find my father there; and thinking that he might have sat down somewhere to wait, I called him aloud, to beg he would come home. There was no answer, but I heard a step coming up the path which runs between the two slopes, and then goes down over the lower, broken part of the cliff to the sea-shore; and feeling sure that it was either my father, or Connor, or one of the boatmen—who would not have hurt me for the world—I was just turning to go down that way, when Lord Hadley sprang up the bank, and caught hold of me by the hand. I besought him to let me go, and then I was very frightened indeed, so that I hardly knew, or know, what I said or did. All I am sure of is, that he tried to per-

suade me to go away with him to France; and that he told me that there was a ship for that country out there at sea, and its boat with the boatmen down upon the shore, for he had spoken to them in the morning. He said a great deal that I forget, telling me that he would marry me as soon as we arrived in France; but I was very angry—too angry, indeed—and what I said in reply seemed to make him quite furious, for he swore that I should go, with a terrible oath. I tried to get away, but he kept hold of my hand, and threw his other arm round me, and was dragging me away down the path towards the sea-shore, when suddenly my father came up, and struck him. I had not been able to resist much, on account of my broken arm, but the moment my father came up he let me go, and returned the blow he had received. We were then close upon the edge of the cliff, and there is, if you recollect, a low railing, where the path begins to descend. My father struck him again and again, and at

last he fell back against the railing, which broke, I think, under his weight, and oh! father, I saw him fall headlong over the cliff. I thought I should have died at that moment, and before I recovered myself, my father had taken me by the hand, and was leading me away. When we had got a hundred yards or two, I stopped, and asked if it would not be better to go or send down to the sea-shore, to see if some help could not be rendered to him. My father said he had heard the boatmen come to assist him, and that was enough."

Clive had covered his eyes with his hand while Helen spoke; but at her last words, he looked up, saying, in a stern tone, "Quite enough! He well deserved what he has met with. I did not intend it, it is true; but whether he be dead or living, he has only had the chastisement he merited. I had heard but an hour or two before all his base conduct to this dear child—I had heard that he had outraged, insulted, persecuted her; and although

I had promised Norries not to kill him, yet I had resolved, the first time I met with him, to flay him alive with my horsewhip. I found him again insulting her; and can any man say I did wrong to punish the base villain on the spot? I regret it not—I would do it again, be the consequences what they may; and so I will tell judge and jury, whenever I am called upon to speak.”

“I trust that may never be, my son,” replied the priest, looking at him with an expression of melancholy interest; “and I doubt not at all, that if you follow the advice which I will give you, suspicion will never even attach to you.”

“I shall be very happy, father, to hear your advice,” answered Clive; “but I have no great fears of any evil consequences. People cannot blame me for striking a man who was insulting and seeking to wrong my child. I did but defend my own blood and her honour, and there is no crime in that.”

“ People often make a crime where there is none, Clive,” answered Mr. Filmer. “ This young man is dead, and you must recollect that he was a peer of England.”

“ That makes no difference,” exclaimed Clive. “ Thank God, we do not live in a land where the peer can do wrong any more than the peasant. I am sorry he is dead, for I did not intend to kill him ; but he well deserved his death, and his station makes no difference.”

“ None in the eye of the law,” replied Mr. Filmer, gravely ; “ but it may make much in the ear of a jury. I know these things well, Clive ; and depend upon it, that if this matter should come before a court of justice at the present time, especially when such wild acts have been committed by the people, you are lost. In the first place, you cannot prove the very defence you make——”

“ Why, my child was there, and saw it all !” cried Clive, interrupting him.

“Her evidence would go for very little,” answered the priest; “and as I know you would not deny having done it, your own candour would ruin you. The best view that a jury would take of your case, even supposing them not to be worked upon by the rank of the dead man, could only produce a verdict of manslaughter, which would send you for life to a penal colony, to labour like a slave—perhaps in chains.”

Clive started, and gazed anxiously in his face, as if that view of the case were new to him. “Better die than that!” he said—“better die than that!”

“Assuredly,” replied Mr. Filmer. “But why should you run the risk of either? I tell you, if you will follow my advice, you shall pass without suspicion.” But Clive waved his hand almost impatiently, saying, “Impossible, father, impossible! I am not a man who can set a guard upon his lips; and I should say things from time to time which would soon

lead men to see and know who it was that did it. I could not converse with any of my neighbours here without betraying myself."

"Then you must go away for a time," answered Filmer. "That was the very advice I was going to give you. If you act with decision, and leave the country for a short time, I will be answerable for your remaining free from even a doubt."

"The very way to bring doubt upon myself," answered Clive, with a short, bitter laugh. "Would not every one ask why Clive ran away?"

"The answer would then be simple," said the priest—"namely, that he went, probably, because he had engaged with his brother-in-law, Norries, in these rash schemes against the government, which have been so signally frustrated this night at Barhampton."

"One crime instead of another!" answered Clive, gloomily, bending down his brow upon his hands again.

“With this difference,” continued Mr. Filmer—“that the one will be soon and easily pardoned, the other never; that for the one you cannot be pursued into another land, that for the other you would be pursued and taken; that the one brings no disgrace upon your name, that the other blasts you as a felon, leaves a stain upon your child, deprives her of a parent, ruins her happiness for ever.”

“Oh fly, father, fly!” cried Helen. “Save yourself from such a horrible fate!”

“What! and leave you here unprotected!” exclaimed Clive.

“Oh no! let me go with you!” cried Helen.

“Of course,” said the priest. “You cannot, and you must not go alone. Take Helen with you, and be sure that her devotion towards you will but increase and strengthen that strong affection which she has inspired in one worthy of her, and of whom she is worthy. I have promised you, Clive, or rather I should say, I have assured you, that your daughter shall be the

wife of him she loves—ay, with his father's full consent. If you follow my advice, it shall be so ; but do not suppose that Sir Arthur would ever suffer his son to marry the daughter of a convict. As it is, he knows that your blood is as good as his own, and that the only real difference is in fortune ; but with a tainted name, the case would be very different. There would be an insurmountable bar against their union, and you would make her whole life wretched, as well as cast away your own happiness for ever."

"But how can I fly?" asked Clive. "The whole thing will be known to-morrow, and ere I reached London I should be pursued and taken."

"There is a shorter way than that," answered Filmer, "and one that cannot fail."

"The French ship!" cried Helen, with a look of joy.

"Even so," rejoined the priest; "she will sail in a few hours. You have nothing to do

but send down what things you need as fast as possible, get one of the boats to row you out, embark, and you are safe. I will give you letters to a friend in Brittany, who will show you all kindness, and you can remain there at peace till I tell you that you may safely return."

Clive paused, and seemed to hesitate for a moment or two; but Helen gazed imploringly in his face, and at length he threw his arms around her, saying, "I will go, my child; I have no right to make you wretched also. Were it for myself alone, nothing should make me run away; but now nothing must induce me to sacrifice you. Go, Helen; get ready quickly—perhaps they may think that I have had some share in this tumult, and suspicion pass away in that manner."

"Undoubtedly they will," rejoined Mr. Filmer; "and I will take care to give suspicion that direction. Be quick, Helen; but do you not need some one to aid you?"

"I will get the girl Margaret," said Helen

Clive, "for I am very helpless." And, closing the door, she departed.

"What shall I do with the farm?" inquired Clive, as soon as she was gone. "I fear everything will go to ruin."

"Not so, not so," answered Mr. Filmer, cheerfully. "I will see that it is well attended to; and though perhaps something may go wrong, against which nothing but the owner's eye can secure, yet nothing like ruin shall take place. And now, hasten away, Clive, and make your own preparations. No time is to be lost, for if the people on board the ship learn that the attack upon Barhampton has failed, they may perhaps put to sea sooner than the hour they had appointed. I will write the letter while you are getting ready, and I will go down with you to the beach, and see you off."

About three quarters of an hour passed in some hurry and confusion, ere Clive and his daughter were prepared to set out. The priest's letter was written and sealed; a man was

called up to wheel some boxes and trunks down to the shore; and various orders and directions were given for the management of the farm during Clive's absence. The servants seemed astonished, but asked no questions; and Mr. Filmer skilfully let drop some words which, when remembered at an after period, might connect the flight of Mr. Clive with the mad attempt upon the town of Barhampton. When all was completed, they set forth on foot, passing through the narrow lanes in the neighbourhood of the house, till they reached and crossed the high road, and then, following one of the little dells through the downs, descended by a somewhat rugged path to the sea-side. Some of the boatmen were already up, preparing to put to sea, and as Clive had often been a friend to all of them, no difficulty was made in fulfilling his desire. The sea was as calm as a small lake; and though the water was too low to launch one of their large boats easily, yet a small one was pushed over the sands, and

Helen and her father stood beside it, ready to embark, when a quick step, running over the beach, was heard, and Mr. Filmer exclaimed, "Quick, quick, into the boat, and put off!"

"That is Edgar's foot," said Helen, hanging back. "Oh, let me wait, and bid him adieu! I know it is Edgar's foot!"

"The ear of love is quick," said Mr. Filmer. "I did not recognise it;" and in another moment Edgar Adelon stood beside them.

"I have been to the house," he said, "and they told me where to seek you."

"We are forced to go away for a time by some unpleasant circumstances, Mr. Adelon," said Clive, gravely.

"I know—I know it all," answered Edgar, quickly. "I watched the whole attack from the hill. It was a strange, ghastly sight, and I will not stop you, Mr. Clive, for it would be ruin to stay; but let me speak one word to dear Helen—but one word, and I will not keep you."

The father made no opposition; he knew

what it was to love well, and he would not withhold the small drop of consolation from the bitter cup of parting. Edgar drew the fair girl a few steps aside, and they spoke together earnestly for a few minutes. He then pressed her hand affectionately in his, and each repeated "For ever!" Then leading her back towards the boat, against the sides of which the water was now rising, he shook Clive's hand warmly, saying, "God bless and protect you! Let me put her in the boat." And before any one could answer, he had lifted Helen tenderly in his arms, walked with her into the shallow water, and placed her in the little bark. Clive followed, after another word or two with Mr. Filmer, the boatmen pushed off, and the prow went glittering through the waves. Edgar Adelon stood and gazed, till Mr. Filmer touched him on the arm, saying, "Come, my son;" and then, with a deep sigh, the young man followed him towards the cliffs

"I must go back to the Grange for my horse,"

said Edgar, as the priest was turning along the high road towards Brandon.

"Better send for it," said Mr. Filmer. "Your father has returned, and may inquire for you."

"It is strange," said Edgar, following him; "I could have sworn I saw his tall bay hunter amongst the people at Barhampton."

"You might well be mistaken," answered Mr. Filmer; "but whatever you saw, Edgar, take my advice, and say to no one that you saw anything—no, not to Eda."

Edgar did not reply, and the rest of their walk passed in silence till they reached the gates of the park. They were open, and a man was standing at the lodge door, with whom the priest paused to speak for an instant, while Edgar, at his request, walked on. Mr. Filmer overtook the young man ere he had gone a hundred yards, and as they approached the house, he said, "You had better go straight to your room, and to bed, Edgar. Unpleasant things have happened. Eda has

retired, your father has another magistrate with him, and neither your presence nor mine will be agreeable."

"To my own room, certainly," answered Edgar Adelon; "but not to bed, nor to sleep, father. I have need of thought more than rest;" and when the door was opened, he passed straight through the hall, taking a light from the servant, and mounting the stairs towards his own room.

CHAPTER V.

WE must now return for a short time to Mr. Dudley, having brought up many of the other personages connected with this tale nearly to the same point at which we last left himself. As soon as he had entered the lodge in the custody of the two constables, he demanded in a calm tone to see their warrant, entertaining but little doubt that he had been apprehended for taking some share in the riots of which he had been a witness, and that the ignorance of the men who held him in custody had occasioned the use of such very vague and unsatisfactory terms as "murder or manslaughter, as the

case may be." What was his astonishment, however, when he read as follows:—

"To the Constable of the Hundred of —, in the County of —, and all the other Peace Officers of the same County.

"Forasmuch as Patrick Ferrers, of the parish of Brandon, in the said county, servant, hath this day made information before me, Stephen Conway, Esquire, one of her Majesty's justices of the peace, in and for the said county, that he hath just cause to suspect, and doth suspect that Edward Dudley, Esquire, on the — day of —, in the year of our Lord 18—, at or near the place called Clive Down, in the said parish of Brandon, in the said county, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder Henry Lord Hadley, by striking him sundry blows, and throwing him over the cliff at the said place, by which the said Lord Hadley instantly died: these are therefore to command you, or one of you, in her Majesty's name, forthwith to ap-

prehend and bring before me, or some other of her Majesty's justices of the peace, in and for the said county, the body of the said Edward Dudley, to answer unto the said charge, and be farther dealt with according to law. Herein fail not."

"Good Heaven!" he exclaimed, in a tone of astonishment, which could not be assumed, "do you mean to say that Lord Hadley has been killed?"

"Come, come, master, that won't do," said the dull brute into whose hands he had fallen. "You know all about it, I dare say. You must march into that 'ere room till to-morrow morning, for there's no use in taking you twenty miles to the jail to bring you back again to-morrow to the crowner's 'quest."

It was with great difficulty that Dudley restrained his temper. The charge at first sight seemed to him ridiculous, and he would have scoffed at it, if horror at the fate of his unhappy pupil had not occupied his mind so

completely that no light thought could find place.

“I ask you civilly, sir,” he said, moving into the room pointed out, closely followed by the constables, “to give me some information in regard to facts which I must know to-morrow morning, and in which I am deeply interested. If you are so discourteous as to refuse me an answer, I cannot force you; but at the same time I suppose there is nobody on earth but yourself who would think of denying me some information respecting a friend who, I gather from your warrant, has been killed.”

“Very like a friend to pitch him over the cliff,” answered the constable. “Howsumdever, the magistrates know all about it, and you had better wait and talk to them, for if you talk more to me I shall send down for the handcuffs—a fool I was for not bringing them with me. We shall sit up with ye by turns, for I am not going to let ye get off, master, you may depend upon it.”

Dudley only replied by a contemptuous smile, and, seating himself in a chair, he gave himself up to thought, while the one constable took a place opposite, and the other retired and locked the door. For nearly two hours Dudley remained meditating over the strange turn which had taken place in his fate; and as he reflected upon various circumstances which had occurred during the evening, his situation began to assume a more serious aspect than it had at first presented. Not that he supposed, for one moment, he was in the slightest danger, for his consciousness of innocence was too great to admit of his believing that, when his whole conduct was explained, a suspicion even would rest upon him; but he recollected the violent dispute which he had had with Lord Hadley in the morning, in the presence of several witnesses, and also called to mind that when he had gone out after dinner, in order to fulfil his promises to Eda, he had been followed and overtaken by Lord

Hadley, and that the first part, at least, of their conversation had been carried on in a sharp and angry tone. He remembered, too, that they had met several people, and that though in the end the young nobleman had seemed somewhat touched by his remonstrances, and surprised and vexed at his decided resignation of all farther responsibility regarding his conduct, no one had witnessed the more moderate and kindly manner in which they had parted, or could prove that they had parted at all before the fatal occurrence of which he had such vague information. The attempt to extract anything more from the constable he saw would be in vain, though he thirsted for intelligence; and his thoughts, after dwelling for some time upon his own case, naturally turned to the unhappy youth who had been cut off at so early a period, in the midst of a career of folly and vice. He could not help sighing over such a result; for notwithstanding headstrong passions, and a certain degree of

weakness of character, which would have prevented Lord Hadley from ever becoming a great man, Dudley had perceived some traits of goodness in his nature, which, under right direction, either by the care of wise and prudent friends, or by the chastening rod of adversity, might have been so guided as to render him an estimable and useful member of society. His mind reverted to his own young days, and he recollected wild schemes, rash enterprises, some faults and follies which he now greatly regretted, and he thought, "If I had gone on, the pampered child of prosperity, I might perhaps have been like him." He did himself injustice, it is true, but still the fancy was a natural one, and he felt, at least, that in his case the uses of adversity had been sweet.

The body and the mind are alternately slaves to each other. When stimulated to strong exertion, the mind conquers the body; when oppressed with fatigue or sickness, the body conquers the mind; but the powers of both seem

sometimes worn out together, and then sleep is the only resource—that heavy, overpowering sleep, the temporary death of all the faculties, when no memory of the past, no knowledge of the present, no expectation of the future, comes in dreams to rouse even fancy from the benumbing influence that overshadows us. Such was the case with Dudley at the end of those two hours. He had gone out early in the morning in the pursuit of healthful exercise; but in the course of his ramble with Edgar Adelon, subjects had arisen which moved him deeply. His young companion, with all the warm enthusiasm and confidence of his nature, had poured forth to him all the stores of grief, anxiety, and indignation, which had been accumulating in silence and in secret since first he had become aware of Lord Hadley's pursuit of Helen; and Dudley, entering warmly into his feelings, had chosen his course at once. He had determined to speak decidedly to his pupil; to place before his eyes the scandal and

the wickedness of that which he was engaged in ; to demand that it should either cease at once, or he quit Brandon ; and in case he refused, to resign all farther control over him, and instantly to make the young peer's relations in London aware of the fact and the cause. Then had come the fierce and angry discussion with Lord Hadley, followed by an agitating conversation with Eda ; another dispute with his pupil, perhaps more painful than the first ; the hurried and anxious walk to Barhampton, and the troubled scene which had taken place there. He was exhausted, mentally and corporeally ; and at the end of two hours he slept, leaning his head upon his folded arms, and remaining so still and silent, that it seemed as if death rather than slumber possessed him. His sleep lasted long, too, and he was aroused only by some one shaking him roughly by the shoulder on the following morning. Dudley started up, and wondered where he was ; but gradually a recollection of all the facts returned ;

and the man's words, "Come, master, the crowner is sitting," required no explanation.

Somewhat to Dudley's surprise, when he reached the door of the lodge, he found the carriage of Sir Arthur Adelon waiting for him; and entering with one constable, while the other took his seat upon the box, he was driven up the avenue to Brandon House. The servants at the door showed no signs of want of respect, and he was immediately conducted between his two captors into the library, where he found a number of persons assembled in a confused mass at the end of the room, and the coroner's jury seated round the large table, near the windows. In the centre was a portly man in a white waistcoat, with a pompous, wine-empurpled face, and an exceedingly bald head, whom he concluded rightly to be the coroner. Several magistrates were also in the room, amongst whom were two persons with whom he had dined at the table of Sir Arthur Adelon a few days before; but Dudley looked

in vain for the baronet himself, or for any well-known and friendly face. He wanted no support, it is true ; for he was not timid by nature, and he was conscious of innocence ; but yet he would have felt well pleased to have had friends around him. One of the magistrates shook hands with him, however, and the other bowed ; while some people near the coroner whispered to that officer, whose eyes were instantly fixed upon the new comer.

“ Mr. Edward Dudley, I believe,” he said, aloud ; and when Dudley signified that it was so by bending his head, the other continued, “ Although not strictly necessary, sir, inasmuch as this is an inquest for the purpose of ascertaining how a certain person met with his death, and we consequently as yet know nothing of accused or accusers, yet, as I have been given to understand that a warrant has been issued for your apprehension under the hand of my worshipful friend, Mr. Conway, I have thought it best that you should be pre-

sent, in order that you should watch proceedings in which you are deeply interested. You will remark that it is not necessary for you to say anything upon this occasion, and to do so or not must be left to your own discretion."

"I thank you for your caution, sir," replied Dudley; "although, having been bred to the bar, it was not so necessary in my case as it might be in some. I have no knowledge of the circumstances which have caused any suspicion to fall upon me, and shall hear with interest the evidence which may be given regarding facts that I am utterly unacquainted with."

"Ahem!" said the coroner. "We will now hear the witnesses in the natural order, gentlemen of the jury. By the natural order, I mean the order in which the facts connected with the discovery happened. Our first question will be, where and how the body was found; next, whose the body is—for you will remark, gentlemen of the jury, that at the present moment

all we know is, that the body of a dead man has been found under exceedingly suspicious circumstances, and we must have it identified; then we must inquire how he came by his death. If the person who first found the corpse is in court, let him stand forward."

A man, of somewhat more than six feet high, in a round jacket and oilskin hat, advanced to the table, and gave his evidence in a very clear and intelligent manner, saying, "I was standing out upon the sand last night, near upon low water——"

"Where at?" asked the coroner. "Pray describe the place as accurately as possible."

"Why, it was just between Gullpoint and our cottages at St. Martin's," replied the boatman; "and the hour might be about eight, or near it. The water was not quite out, so it must have been about eight. I was standing looking out after the French brig, which had been making signals like, with lights of different colours, which I did not understand, when all

in a minute I heard some one give a sort of loud cry, just as if they had been hurt or frightened. It came from the land, and I heard it quite plain, for the wind set off shore, and turning round, I looked up in the way that the sound seemed to come from——”

“Was it moonlight?” asked the coroner.

“Lord bless you, no, sir,” replied the boatman; “but the night was not very dark, for that matter. However, as I turned, I heard a bit of a row at the top of the cliff, and I could see two men standing up there close together—one a tall man, t’other a little shorter; and the tall one hit the other twice or three times, and then down he came. I could see him fall back, but after that I lost him, for you see, sir, as he tumbled down the cliff, it was darker there. When they were a-top, they had got the sky behind them; but when he fell, he got into the gloom, and I saw no more of him, till, hearing a cry almost like that of a gull, only louder, I ran up as hard as I could. As I

came over the shingle near the cliff, I heard a groan or two, and just below the rock I found the young man who is in t'other room, lying with his feet to the beach and his head to the cliff; so, you see, he must have turned right over, once at least, as he tumbled."

"What distance were you from the cliff when you saw the two men quarrelling?" asked the coroner.

"It might be a hundred yards or more," replied the boatman; "perhaps two."

"And did you see them clearly?" inquired the officer.

"Clear enough to see what they were about," answered the fisherman, "but not to see their faces."

"You have said one was tall, the other shorter," continued the coroner; "do you see any one here of the height of the taller one, as far as you can judge?"

The man looked round him, and it so unfortunately happened that Dudley, anxious to

hear all the evidence, had taken a step or two forward. The boatman's eyes instantly fell upon him, and pointing him out with his hand, he said, "Much about that gentleman's height, I should think."

"Do you mean to say, that you think he was the man?" asked the coroner, while a slight frown came over Dudley's face.

"No, that's another case," answered the stout boatman. "All that I could see, as they stood and I stood, was, that the one was taller than the other a good bit, and that the tall one knocked the short one over the cliff."

The three succeeding witnesses were of the same class and profession as the first; but they proved nothing more than the finding of the injured man, his insensible condition when they came up, and his death, without having spoken, as they carried him to Brandon House.

"I think we must have the evidence of Sir Arthur Adelon," said the coroner, looking towards one of the servants, several of whom

were in the room. "Pray present my compliments to him, and say that I should be glad of his presence for a few moments."

Sir Arthur, however, did not appear immediately; and when he entered, there was a good deal more agitation in his manner than he could have desired. His first act was to shake hands with Dudley, in a friendly, even a warm manner; and the coroner, rising, bowed low to one of the great men of the neighbourhood, apologizing for troubling him, as he called it.

"It is necessary, Sir Arthur," he said, "to make a few inquiries—as I am given to understand that the unfortunate young nobleman who met with his death last night in so tragical a manner has been for some days an inmate of your house, as well as the gentleman who labours under suspicion—as to whether you are aware of any circumstance tending to corroborate the charge—any quarrel, I mean, between the parties, or anything likely to produce so fatal a result?"

“Of nothing in the world,” replied Sir Arthur Adelon, in a frank tone. “Lord Hadley and my friend, Mr. Dudley, have always appeared, in my presence, at least, upon the very best terms. What took place yesterday I am not aware of, as I was out the greater part of the day, until late in the evening, having heard very unpleasant rumours, which have proved, alas! too correct, and wishing to ascertain the facts, and to see what could best be done for the good of the community.”

His eye glanced to Dudley’s face as he uttered the last somewhat vague and double-meaning words, but the countenance he looked at remained perfectly calm and firm, without the slightest perceptible change of expression.

“Then you have no cause, Sir Arthur,” inquired the coroner, “to suppose Mr. Dudley at all implicated in this transaction?”

“From my own personal knowledge, none in the world,” answered the baronet. “There are always rumours afloat after deeds are done,

but if my deliberate opinion could have any weight, I should say that Mr. Dudley is perfectly incapable of intentionally injuring any man. That he would do much to save or serve a fellow-creature, I believe; but nothing to wrong or aggrieve one."

"High testimony," said the coroner, in a pompous tone. "I am much obliged, Sir Arthur;" and looking at a slip of paper which he held in his hand, he pronounced the name of Patrick Ferrers. The butler at Brandon House immediately stood forward, and without much questioning, made a deposition somewhat to the following effect:—"I knew the late Lord Hadley; I have known him since he has been at Brandon House. He was the same gentleman whose body now lies in the dining-room. He was here about ten days before he met with his death. I know also the prisoner, Mr. Dudley. I never saw any quarrel between them till yesterday, when Mr. Dudley and Lord Hadley came home about the same time to-

gether, and Mr. Dudley insisted on speaking in private with Lord Hadley. Mr. Dudley seemed a little cross, and they went into this room together. I went, in the meantime, to fetch some letters which had been brought while they were out. When I came back, I saw Lord Hadley coming out of the library, seemingly in a great passion. He shook his fist at Mr. Dudley, and seemed to be using very hard words, which I did not hear. Mr. Dudley was then a step or two behind him, but he seemed very angry too, though not so angry as his lordship; and I could hear every word he said, though perhaps I cannot recollect them exactly now, but I know that they were something like, ‘ You had better take care what you say of me, my lord, for if you treat me disrespectfully, I will punish you, depend upon it.’ ”

The coroner looked towards Mr. Dudley, who observed, in a quiet tone, “ The words were not exactly those, but the meaning is given with sufficient accuracy.”

“Go on,” said the coroner. “Did you observe anything of a similar nature during the rest of the day?”

“About an hour after,” continued the butler, “Lord Hadley went out again, Mr. Dudley followed him, and I heard the gamekeeper say——”

“We must have nothing upon hearsay,” exclaimed the coroner; “the gamekeeper, I dare say, can answer for himself. Speak to what is within your own knowledge.”

“When Mr. Dudley came back, I was in the hall. The porter let him in, but we both remarked that he looked a good deal ruffled. At dinner, he and Lord Hadley seemed very cool and snappish to each other; and immediately after dinner Mr. Dudley went out, and Lord Hadley went after him, asking Brown, the head footman, which way the other gentleman had gone. I heard him myself, so that I can speak to; and that is the last I saw or heard of either of them, till his lordship’s body was brought in

last night, and Mr. Dudley came here this morning."

"John Brown!" said the coroner, and the head footman stood forward. He corroborated the greater part of the butler's testimony, and added but little else, except an expression of his own opinion that the young lord and Mr. Dudley had been out of sorts with each other, as he termed it, all the preceding day.

The gamekeeper was then brought forward, and stated, that he was just walking away from the house, after having been out with Mr. Dudley and Mr. Adelon during the whole morning, when the former came up to him with a quick step, asked which way the young nobleman had taken, and followed him as fast as he could go.

The man and woman at the lodge were then called, and proved that, a little before eight on the preceding night, they were standing together at the door of their cottage, when the young peer and Mr. Dudley passed out of the

park. The man said that they were talking very angrily, and the woman that they were speaking very quick, but she remembered hearing Mr. Dudley say, "Such conduct is most reprehensible, my lord, and will receive chastisement sooner or later." Both she and her husband deposed that the young peer and Mr. Dudley took their way towards the Downs, and a labourer stated that he had seen two gentlemen going on in the same direction, one of whom was tall like the prisoner, and the other somewhat shorter. "They were then speaking quick and sharp," he said, "and one of them was tossing his arms about a good deal."

A pause for a moment or two succeeded, and then the coroner raised his voice, saying, "Is there any one else who can give evidence in this case? Let it be recollected, that it is the bounden duty of all men, when a crime has been committed, to assist in bringing the criminal to justice."

"Please your worship," said a tall, raw-boned man, coming forward towards the table, "I think I can say a word or two, if ye would be kind enough to hear me."

"We are here to listen to everyone who can speak to any facts connected with the death of the unfortunate young nobleman whose body has been lately viewed by the jury," was the coroner's reply. "Speak to facts, without entering into hearsay, my good man; and in the first place, tell us what is your name and occupation."

"I am a labourer by trade, and my name is Daniel Connor," answered the witness; "and as to facts, it's just them I've got to speak about, for I suppose I am the only man, except the boatman, who saw the thing done. I was just taking a walk quietly upon the downs, over above St. Martin's, when I saw the young lord—I've seen him many a time before down at Mr. Clive's farm—come walking along very dully like. I saw him quite well, though he didn't see me, for he was walking along the

road in the little dell, and I was sitting down above."

"Why, I thought you said you were walking," said the coroner.

"To be sure I was," answered Daniel Connor; "sorrow a thing else. I was taking a walk and sitting down, your worship, as many a man does, I believe."

"Was there any one else with Lord Hadley?" asked the coroner.

"That I can't just say," answered Connor. "There was nobody close to him, or I should have seen them both at once, and there might be somebody not far off, as indeed there was; but you see, your worship, I leaned back upon the turf, for I didn't want to be disturbed in my meditations."

"Ah!" said the coroner. "Go on, my man."

"Well, a minute after—it might be two minutes, perhaps, for I wont be particular as to that—I heard two men quarrelling, and looking up to the sky, I saw them clear enough."

“What ! in the sky ?” said the coroner.

“No, agin it,” replied the witness; “for both their feet were upon the ground at that time, but just at the edge of the cliff, where there’s a bit of a rail. They were hitting each other about, and being a peaceable man any how, having had enough of rows in my own country—that’s Ireland, your worship—I sat quite still, and then the one gave the other a great knock, and away he went back over the railing, and so I walked quietly home, and saw no more.”

“Be so good as to describe the man who struck the other, and knocked him over the cliff,” said the coroner.

“Why, that’s mighty difficult to do,” answered Daniel Connor, “seeing that they were fifty yards off and more, and looked just like two black shadows on the wall.”

“Did you ever see him before ?” demanded the crown officer, somewhat impatiently.

“Maybe I have,” answered the witness; “but I should not just like to say for certain.”

"But you had no doubt in the case of Lord Hadley," rejoined the coroner.

"That was natural like," answered Daniel Connor; "for he came within ten yards of me, and t'other was a good bit farther off when I saw him."

"Let me try, Mr. Coroner," said the foreman of the jury. "Was he a tall man, or a short man, witness?"

"Oh! it was a tall man he was," replied Connor; "I dare say an inch taller than I am, and I'm no bantam."

"Did you ever see that gentleman before?" continued the foreman, pointing out Dudley.

"I think I have, your honour," answered the witness.

"Was he the man you saw strike Lord Hadley on the cliff?" demanded the coroner, in a stern tone.

"I shouldn't just like to swear," answered Daniel Connor; "but he's not unlike him, any how."

For the first time a sense of danger reached

Dudley's bosom; and stepping forward at once, he placed himself directly before the witness, and gazed sternly in his face. An impression—a feeling, without any apparent cause, and which he could not account for himself, took possession of him, that the man was wilfully giving untrue evidence. But his severe searching look had no effect upon the mind of Daniel Connor. It was under a more powerful influence; and though in reality by no means a bad or malicious man, yet, relying upon the assurances of the priest, he looked upon the matter between Dudley and himself rather as a game that they were playing than anything else; and the same shrewd, momentary smile passed over his countenance which had once crossed it while conversing with the priest during the preceding night. He gave a glance at the prisoner's face, and in answer, as it seemed, to his gaze, he said, "Ay—yes, sir, you are mighty like him, any how; but I should not just like to swear."

“Will you allow me, sir, to ask this man some questions?” inquired Dudley, addressing the coroner.

“Undoubtedly,” replied that officer; “and the jury will be very happy to hear any explanation you may have to give regarding this affair.”

“Now, answer me truly,” said Dudley.—“What were you doing upon the downs at that hour of the night?”

“Just taking a walk, your honour,” replied the man.

“And what had you been engaged in all day?” demanded Dudley.

“I had been ploughing all the morning, from daylight till dinner-time,” answered Connor; “and arter that, I had been doing a many little jobs about the farm.”

“And yet after that you went to take a long walk over the downs,” said Dudley. “Now, will you swear that Lord Hadley did not come up the road you mention alone?”

“No, I wont swear that,” replied Connor, “for I did not see. He was alone, sure enough, when I first set eyes upon him; but you see, your honour, some one must have been very near him, for a minute or two arter, some one pitched him over the cliff.”

“Was he walking fast or slow?” asked Dudley.

“Mighty slow, considering that it was a cold night,” answered the witness.

“And yet you thought fit to sit down and meditate on that cold night,” remarked Dudley. “Did you hear any words spoken between the young nobleman and the man who killed him?”

“Oh, ay! there was plenty of talk,” replied Connor, “but I didn’t hear what they said.”

“Now, you have said that you knew Lord Hadley at once,” continued Dudley; “it was a dark night, and he was down in a road below you, you assert; and yet you declare that you cannot be sure of who was the man

who afterwards struck him, though they were then both clear out against the sky."

"I didn't say I wasn't sure," answered the witness, somewhat maliciously. "I may be sure enough, and yet not like to swear, your honour."

Dudley asked several other questions, but they were to no purpose, or only served to confirm the impression already produced. He himself felt that it was so ; and with a slight touch of that eager impatience which had once been strong in his disposition, before adversity had tamed it, he exclaimed, turning towards the jury, "I know not, gentlemen, what is this man's object—perhaps, indeed, I ought not to assume that he has any object—but all his words are evidently calculated to give you a false view of the case. As has been sworn by other persons, I did go out yesterday, immediately after dinner. I was joined by Lord Hadley. There was some discussion between us as we walked along, but it was not of so

angry character as that of the morning; and allow me to say that the dispute between us was entirely as between tutor and pupil. I found it necessary to reprehend some part of Lord Hadley's conduct, and he being very nearly of age, angrily resisted all authority, and refused to listen to my counsel. As we walked along together last night, although there were occasional bursts of passion on his part, I thought that my arguments had produced some effect, and we parted at a spot where the high road towards Barhampton is traversed by the path leading from Clive Grange over the downs, and through the brake in the hills to the sea-shore. He was then calm, though somewhat gloomy; and I walked on nearly to Barhampton, where I was a witness to a very serious riot. I returned immediately towards Brandon, and was seized in the avenue by two constables, who refused to give me any information farther than merely showing their warrant. I call God to witness that I never saw Lord

Hadley after we parted at the cross-road. This is all I have to say, and the only explanation of my conduct that can be given."

"Perhaps, sir, you will have the goodness to inform us what it was that took you to Barhampton at so late an hour," said the coroner.

Sir Arthur Adelon, who had been standing near the table, drew back, and walked towards the end of the room, as if about to quit it, but paused amongst the crowd before he reached the door. Dudley remarked the movement of apprehension; but he was resolved not to betray him on any account, and he replied, after a moment's pause, "I went on private business, sir."

"A curious hour to transact business," said the coroner. "Can you not explain the nature of it, even in general terms?"

"In a certain degree, I have no objection," replied Dudley. "It related to some papers belonging to my late father, and I wished to say a few words upon the subject to a gentle-

man whom it was necessary for me to see that night. I had no means of seeing him at an earlier hour, or in every respect I should have preferred it."

The coroner paused thoughtfully for a moment or two, and then asked, "Have you anything to add, sir?"

Dudley signified that he had not, and the room was ordered to be cleared.

As soon as the coroner was alone with his jury, he addressed them in a somewhat long and florid speech, being a man rather fond of his own eloquence. His observations in regard to the general duties of persons in their situation may be spared the reader, but after having discussed that topic for some time, he proceeded to comment upon the evidence. "It is proved," he said, "that Mr. Dudley and the unfortunate young nobleman had been upon bad terms during the whole of that day; that they had quarrelled, and used threatening language to each other; and that they continued

in dispute till the last moment they were seen together. I do not wish to make the case worse than it is, gentlemen of the jury, or to say that Mr. Dudley went out with any evil intentions towards his pupil. There is no animus shown, and it must be recollected that he went out first, and his lordship followed; but I do mean to say we have it clearly before us, that they were both in that state of mind which rendered a quarrel of the most serious description, even to acts of violence, extremely probable. Then we trace them together for some way, on the road to the very spot where the fatal occurrence took place. Even by Mr. Dudley's account, not many minutes could have elapsed between the time at which he says they parted, and the time when Lord Hadley met with his death—hardly time enough for the young nobleman to have met and quarrelled with another man. Then we have the evidence of the fisherman or boatman, and the evidence of the labourer, Daniel

Connor, each account confirming the other. The one says that the fatal blow was struck by a tall man, such as you have seen Mr. Dudley is; the other, that the person who quarrelled with, and ultimately killed Lord Hadley, was a tall man, very much like Mr. Dudley, though, from the darkness of the night, he will not absolutely swear to him. Now, gentlemen, this is a very conclusive train of evidence taken by itself; but let us examine Mr. Dudley's own statement. He admits all the previous facts: the quarrelling in the morning; the going out at night; the being followed by Lord Hadley; their walk together towards the very spot; and their arrival at a place which, as far as my recollection serves, is only a few hundred yards from the scene of the tragedy. Mr. Dudley, indeed, says that he there left Lord Hadley, and walked on towards Barhampton, upon business of which he will give no distinct account. Doubtless he might walk to Barhampton, and that he did go somewhere

is very clear, for he did not return to Brandon Park, we are informed, till about midnight ; but it is just as probable as not, that he should wander about for some time after committing such an act as certainly was perpetrated by some one. That he did do so is not the slightest presumption of innocence, but rather, perhaps, the contrary. Then, again, we have to consider the conduct of Lord Hadley, and to ask ourselves, was it probable that, after parting with Mr. Dudley, he should go on in a cold, unpleasant night to stroll upon the downs, without, as far as we know, any object whatsoever. It is evident that, when he last went out from this house, he followed his tutor, to speak with him on the same painful subjects which had led to such severe quarrels in the morning. When their discussion was at an end, it would seem much more likely that he should return to Brandon House, where a pleasant family party was waiting his return. Such would probably have been his conduct if Mr.

Dudley's statements were correct. But does it not naturally suggest itself to your minds, as much more likely that the dispute was carried on vehemently between the two gentlemen ; that the young nobleman took the path over the downs, followed, at some short distance, by his tutor ; that more irritating words passed when they reached the top of the cliff, and that the fatal blow was struck which hurried the young nobleman into eternity. It is for you, gentlemen of the jury, to consider all these facts, and to decide upon your verdict. If you judge that the hand of Mr. Dudley did really slay the young nobleman, the manner of whose death is the subject of this inquiry, you will have to choose between two courses. If you believe that Mr. Dudley entertained a premeditated design to kill his pupil—of which, I confess, I see no trace in the evidence—you will bring in a verdict of ' Wilful Murder.' If, on the contrary, you think that the act was committed in a moment of hasty passion—for,

remark, the fact of the blow not having been intended to produce death is no justification—you will then bring in a verdict of ‘Manslaughter;’ and whatever view you take, you will remember that this is only a preliminary inquiry, and that the person upon whom suspicion falls will have the opportunity, at an after period, of bringing forward any evidence he pleases to prove his innocence.”

The jury took very little time to deliberate. They were most of them sensible men, in a respectable station of life, perhaps a little too easily bent by the opinions of a superior; but even had not the coroner’s own view of the case been so evident, they probably would have come to the same decision. After a few words had passed between them, to ascertain that they were all of one mind, their foreman returned a verdict of “Manslaughter against Edward Dudley.”

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Dudley was taken out of the library where the coroner's jury sat, he was surrounded in the hall by several persons, all eager to have some conversation with him. Mr. Conway, the magistrate who had signed the warrant for his apprehension, spoke to him in a good-humoured way, expressing his sorrow that he had been called upon to perform so unpleasant a duty. Dudley bowed stiffly, but did not reply, for he was neither pleased with the act nor the apology; but he was immediately succeeded by another magistrate, who, with as much kindness and more judg-

ment, pressed him to call every little particular of his walk on the preceding night to his mind; to put them down while they were still fresh in his memory; and to try to recollect every one he had seen or spoken with between the period of his quitting Brandon and his return, in order to prepare an unbroken chain of evidence for his defence. "I have known a man's life saved," he said, "by keeping a note-book, in which he wrote down at night everything which had occurred to him during the day."

Dudley thanked him for his suggestions, and felt that he did not believe him guilty; but at the same time he perceived very clearly that the magistrate concluded the coroner's jury would give a verdict against him. Almost at the same moment, Sir Arthur Adelon came up, and, with a very peculiar expression of countenance, pressed his hand, but without speaking. The next moment, Edgar came in from the park, through the glass doors. His whole appearance betrayed great agitation. His eye

was flashing, his cheek flushed, and there was a nervous, excitable quivering of his lip as he approached Dudley, which told how much he was moved. He wrung the prisoner's hand hard, with a swimming moisture in his eyes which he seemed ashamed of; but his tongue failed him when he tried to speak, and all he could say was, "Oh, Dudley!"

"You do not think me guilty, I am sure, my young friend," said Dudley.

"Guilty!" cried Edgar—"guilty! Oh! no, no; guilty of nothing but of too high and noble a heart. I have been out all the morning since I heard of this dreadful affair, seeking for evidence all the way you went; but I have been able to find none. Which way did you take after you passed the lodge?"

"It matters not, Edgar, at present," answered Dudley. "Many thanks for your kindness, but all that must be thought of hereafter. I can easily see how these good gentlemen will decide, and I must have counsel down from

London, who will gather together the necessary testimony to prove my innocence of an act I never even dreamed of. I shall call upon your kindness, I dare say, Edgar, in the course of this affair."

"Believe me, my dear sir," said Sir Arthur Adelon, "nothing shall be wanting on my part to give you every assistance. I need not tell you that, as I said before the jury, I am fully and entirely convinced of your innocence, and shall ever remain so, being certain, from what I know of your character, that you are quite incapable of committing such an act, even in a moment of anger."

"Let me add my assurance, also, Mr. Dudley," said the priest, approaching with his quiet step. "You are not a man to give way to hasty bursts of passion."

"I trust not, Mr. Filmer," replied Dudley; "and on the present occasion there was no provocation. In the morning, indeed, Lord Hadley used very intemperate language to-

wards me; but at night, though he had evidently drunk more wine than was wise, yet, as I have often remarked with him before, the effect was to render him more placable and good-humoured."

"Showing that he was not bad at heart," said Mr. Conway—" *in vino veritas*, Mr. Dudley."

"I do not think he was bad at heart, by any means," replied Dudley. "Prosperity and weakness of character ought to bear many of the sins which are laid upon the shoulders of a bad disposition. I trust, Sir Arthur," he continued, "you will have the kindness to break this sad event to poor Lady Hadley, who, although she has, thank Heaven, other children to console her, will feel her loss most bitterly."

Some farther conversation of the same kind took place, during which the same little crowd continued round the prisoner, while Edgar Adelon kept his place close to Dudley's side, with a look of impatience and anxiety which

led the latter to believe that his young friend had something of importance to communicate. It was by this time about half-past nine, the usual breakfast hour at Brandon House, and the spot where Dudley stood was directly opposite the foot of the great staircase. The two constables were close behind him; and, as I said before, the magistrates and others who had been present at the inquest as spectators, had remained around him in the hall, not expecting that the coroner's address to his jury would be so tediously long as it proved.

"They are a long time in finding their verdict," said one of the magistrates; and as he spoke, Edgar Adelon crossed over to his father, and said, "Would it not be better that we should wait in your justice-room? Eda will be down directly, depend upon it."

"I forgot—I forgot," said his father. "I had better go and communicate to her what has taken place."

"Does she not know?" asked Dudley.

“Nothing—nothing,” replied the baronet, and was advancing towards the stairs; but he was too late, for Miss Brandon had turned the first flight from her own room before he reached the foot. She paused for an instant, seeing such a number of people in the hall; but the next moment she proceeded, with a look of apprehension; for the sight at once awakened fears in regard to her uncle, though she had been assured, before she retired to rest the night preceding, that Sir Arthur had returned safe and well.

The baronet advanced to meet her; and Dudley, yielding to the impulse of his heart, took a step or two forward to say a few words, the last, perhaps, he might be able to speak to her for some months. Eda’s eyes were fixed upon him as she came down the last two steps; but ere he could reach her, the head constable caught him rudely by the collar, exclaiming, “Come, come, master, I mustn’t lose hold of ye, seeing as how this is a case of murder.”

Eda gazed wildly in Dudley's face for an instant, and then dropped fainting on the floor of the hall.

"Look to her, Edgar—look to her, Edgar," said Dudley, in a low voice. "Do not let her alarm herself so. Tell her, for Heaven's sake, that the charge is false—nay, absurd."

A number of persons ran forward to assist Miss Brandon, and carried her into the breakfast-room. At the same moment, the door of the library opened, and the constables were ordered to bring in the prisoner. They hurried him in without ceremony, and he found the jury still seated round the table, and the coroner on his feet, with a written paper in his hand. "The verdict of the jury," he said, aloud, "is Manslaughter against Edward Dudley, Esquire. Constables, I have here made out a warrant for the committal of that gentleman to the county jail; but of course, if the magistrates who ordered his apprehension think fit to proceed with their own separate

investigation of the case, it will be your duty to consult their convenience as to the time of his removal; and I will add, that you are bound to put him to no unnecessary inconvenience consistent with his safe custody—a course which I must say you do not seem to have followed hitherto.”

The chief constable held down his head with a dogged look, but without reply; and Mr. Conway, standing forward, addressed the coroner, saying, “I, as the magistrate who issued the warrant, do not see any necessity, sir, for taking this matter at all out of the hands of your court. The case has undergone here a very minute and well-conducted investigation, and I do not think anything could be added which may not quite as well be brought forward at the assizes.”

The two gentlemen bowed to each other with mutual polite speeches, and Dudley was removed in custody of the two officers.

“A pack of fools,” murmured Edgar Adelon, in no very inaudible tone; and following

Dudley out of the room, he crossed the hall to the breakfast-room, when the constables seemed somewhat puzzled how to proceed with their prisoner. The next moment, however, Edgar returned with his father, who advanced direct towards Dudley, saying, "I grieve very much, Mr. Dudley, that the jury have thought fit to come to this conclusion; but you must use my carriage over to —, and as I am one of the visiting magistrates, I will take care that the short residence which you must submit to in a prison, shall be rendered as little inconvenient to you as possible."

Dudley thanked him for his kindness, took leave of Edgar, and in a few minutes was rolling away to a town at the distance of about sixteen miles, with one constable by his side, and the other on the box.

The first reflections of the prisoner were naturally not very pleasant; but those which succeeded were still less agreeable. A hard fate seemed to pursue him. Born to station,

affluence, and ease, he had set out in life filled with bright hopes and eager expectations. The sparkling cup of youth had seemed replete with pleasant drops of every kind, and he had little dreamed, while such bright things appeared upon the surface, that there was such a bitter draught below. He had indulged in many a wild and ardent fancy, and sated, if not spoiled, by the cup of success, had longed, as every young man has longed, for change, for new pleasures, for pursuits opposite to those which he had followed, for enjoyments differing in their novelty to the joys which he had tasted. Ah! little does one know in youth, when we seek a change of condition, what it is we pray for. Even if that very alteration which we desire is granted to us, we find it loaded with evils unforeseen, with inherent cares and anxieties which we had never perceived, with consequences destructive of all our bright expectations. But how often does it happen, that when pampered happiness seeks

mere abstract change, from satiated appetite and the desire of fresh enjoyment, the chastening hand on high sends bitter reverses, to teach us the value of the blessings we despised, and to lead us to that humble thankfulness which is rarely to be found in the ungrateful heart of prosperity. Adverse fortunes had fallen upon him early, and coming to a strong and thoughtful mind, had produced the full fruits of the wholesome lesson. Fortune, and all that fortune gives, had been lost; and even the society of a wise and affectionate parent had been taken away. He had had to soothe the departing hours of a beloved father through a long sickness; he had had to struggle with difficulties and to undertake labours never contemplated at the outset of his career; and now, when both love and fortune smiled upon him for an instant again, like a gleam of sunshine through a stormy cloud, the light seemed snatched away as soon as given—the flame of hope extinguished as soon as kindled. But he

had felt and acknowledged the uses of adversity; and although—with the natural superstition which is in every man's heart, which led men in ancient, and even some in modern times, to believe in the ascendancy of a propitious or unpropitious star—he had first felt inclined to suppose that his evil fortunes dogged him as a destiny from which he could not fly, yet reason and religion taught him that the sorrows which are sent by the Almighty are ordained in mercy, and in the end, he said, "This may be salutary too."

The first fruits of true Christian resignation are exertion; and giving up all useless ponderings upon the past, as he rode along, he turned to provide against the future; but, strange to say, his thoughts became more gloomy as he did so. He tried to collect and arrange in his mind all the evidence he could bring forward in his defence; but with a feeling of pain and apprehension to which he had never before given way, he perceived nothing

that he could add at the assizes to that which had been brought forward before the coroner's jury. He had seen nobody from the moment when Lord Hadley quitted him, till he came upon the men on watch at Mead's Farm. Of these he knew not one even by name; and he was too clear-sighted not to perceive, even in his own case, that his having met them some time afterwards, was no proof whatever that he had not committed previously the act with which he was charged. To show an object in going out at that late hour of the evening might indeed have some effect; but yet he felt it would be impossible, with a regard to his own honour, for so small an advantage, to betray the confidence which had been placed in him, and to ruin Sir Arthur Adelon, with very little benefit to himself. One slight probability, indeed, in his favour might be raised, by his proving the cause of the angry discussions which had taken place between himself and Lord Hadley; and yet he felt a repug-

nance either to cast an imputation upon the dead, or to bring forward the name of Helen Clive under such circumstances. He did not indeed entertain such romantic notions of honour and chivalrous courtesy, as to think that it would be unjustifiable to do either, if his own safety absolutely depended upon it; but he resolved, in the first place, to consult his counsel as to whether it was necessary, and then to send a message to Mr. Clive, telling him that such was the case. With that exception he had nothing to add to what he had already said; and although it would tell in his favour to show that the dispute between himself and his pupil was honourable to himself, and showed a mind not likely to commit a crime, yet he saw very clearly that it was no distinct evidence of innocence. All these thoughts occupied him long; his companion, though more civil than before, was dull and gloomy; and Dudley was still meditating over his course, when the first houses of a town

came in view, and then a large stone building, with emblematic fetters over the gate; and in two minutes more he was within the walls of a prison.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE were two persons in Brandon House who suffered deeply on the morning when Dudley was carried away to prison; and each mistakenly encouraged some degree of self-reproach—such as none but delicate minds can feel—for having unwittingly and unwillingly placed one they loved in a dangerous and painful position. Eda Brandon thought, “Had I not taxed his generosity to forgive, uninquiringly, injuries of which he knew not the extent, and to go forth to save from disgrace and danger the very man who had in-

flicted them, this false charge could never have been brought."

Edgar Adelon said to himself, "If I had not communicated to him all my suspicions regarding the conduct of this young, reptile lord towards my sweet Helen, he would not, in a fit of generous indignation, have done that which has brought him into peril and sorrow. Oh, that I had had any other friend at hand to consult upon the conduct I should pursue! Oh, that Helen, telling me all, had justified me in driving forth the viper from my cousin's house! Oh, that Father Peter had not withheld the tale of all the insults that she suffered, till it was too late for me to act, and another had punished the offender as I ought to have done!"

Such thoughts passed through his mind about two hours after Dudley's removal from Brandon, and while Eda was still in her own room, to which she had been carried as soon as the house had resumed its usual state. Mr.

Filmer and Sir Arthur Adelon were closeted in the library, and the only apparent result of their conversation as yet had been an order for one of the grooms to ride as fast as possible to Barhampton, and bring four post-horses to carry the baronet on his way to London.

“What can I do? How can I act?” Edgar Adelon asked himself. “I must have some one to consult with, and I know not whom. I do not believe my father loves Dudley at his heart. I have seen him eye him with an expression of dislike; and I will not trust the priest. Good man as he is, his policy is always a subtle one. It is a pity that, with those Italians, amongst whom he lived so long, he acquired that covert and indirect mode of dealing. His purposes and ends are always right, I do believe—too right and honest to be sought by crooked means. I must talk with Eda; she is candour and truth itself, and yet has wit enough to put all Filmer’s arts at fault. I will talk with her;” and with his usual hasty

action, he was going at once to put his purpose in execution, when he heard his father come out of the library, go up the stairs, and knock at his cousin's door.

Sir Arthur remained long with his niece ; and Edgar, who remained in the room below for some time, thought he heard his father's voice sometimes raised higher than usual. At other times, however, it sounded with a low murmur, as if holding a long and earnest argument. The young man grew impatient at length, and going forth into the park, he wandered about for nearly an hour, and when he returned, found Sir Arthur's post-chariot at the door, ready to bear him away.

"Your father has been waiting for you, Mr. Adelon," said the butler. "He is in the breakfast-room." And Edgar immediately directed his steps thither, without asking any questions.

"Why, Edgar, did you not know I was going?" demanded the baronet, as soon as his son appeared ; and then, without waiting for a

reply, he proceeded: "It is necessary for me, my dear boy, to go up to London at once, to break the sad intelligence of Lord Hadley's death to his poor mother. In the meantime, I think it will be better for you—more decent, more proper—to meddle as little as possible with the affairs of a gentleman charged with having produced his death, at least till after he has had a fair trial, and is acquitted or found guilty. I have some other business of importance to transact in London, but I trust to be down in time to be present at the funeral, if it is to be performed here. Mr. Filmer will make all the necessary arrangements according to the directions he will receive."

Edgar Adelon was, like most young men, somewhat wrong-headed. His disposition was too firm and generous for him to be spoiled, as it is usually called; but he had been very much indulged, and usually took his own way. He never, indeed, showed the least want of respect

towards his father, in word or manner; but he generally followed the course which suited him best, with less reverence in his actions than in his deportment. On the present occasion, then, he made no reply, but remained determined to do everything he could for Dudley, notwithstanding all opposition. After a few more words from Sir Arthur, Edgar accompanied his father to the door of the carriage, took leave of him, and then at once mounted the stairs to Eda's room, and knocked at the door.

"Go into my little sitting-room, Edgar," said Eda, who knew his step, "and I will come to you directly. I wish much to speak to you, my dear cousin."

But Eda kept him some time waiting, and when she came at length, Edgar saw that tears had been late visitants in her eyes.

"Do not grieve, Eda, dear," said Edgar, taking her hand kindly. "This will all pass away; but let you and I sit down together, and consult what can best be done for poor Dudley.

He will be acquitted, to a certainty, I think—nay, I am sure.”

“I do not know, Edgar,” answered Eda; “but in the meantime we must do all we can to help and comfort him; and that is why I wished to speak with you so much, for I know no one but you who seem to love him here.”

“Oh, yes! there is one other, Eda,” answered Edgar, with a smile—“one who loves him very well, I think.”

The colour rose in Eda’s cheek, but she raised her eyes to his, answering at once, “There certainly is, Edgar, and I have just told your father so. I avow it, Edgar, the more frankly, because it is necessary, if we really would serve him, to have no concealments from each other. We have jested and laughed over such things, Edgar; but now it is necessary that we should speak plainly, both of your situation and mine.”

“First, then, tell me what my father said,” answered Edgar. “I promise you, Eda, dear,

I will have no concealments from you now. You are a sweet, kind, affectionate girl as ever lived, and you have neither pride nor prejudices which should make me afraid to tell you all my own feelings. Let me hear what my father answered when you told him of Dudley's love, and what you said to him again."

"He said much, Edgar, that was very unpleasant," replied Eda; "but do not let me dwell upon it. He found me firmer than he expected, and he is now fully aware of my intentions, and, moreover, aware that he can never change them—at least I hope so, for what I said should leave no doubt. But now to other matters. I think you have a sincere affection for Dudley—is it not so?"

"I would lay down my life for him," answered Edgar Adelon. "But when I said that there was another who loved him well too, I did not altogether mean you, Eda, but I meant Mr. Filmer."

Eda waved her hand and shook her head.

“Your religious feelings blind you, Edgar,” she said. “Mr. Filmer does not love him, never has loved him. There was a peculiar look came into his face the very first moment he saw Dudley here, which you did not remark, but which I did, and which I have remarked more than once before, when any one whom he hates approaches him. It is but for a moment, but it is very distinct; and moreover, I have seldom seen any one call up that look who has not somehow fallen into misfortune. Do you remember the farmer Hadyer, upon your father’s estate in Yorkshire, and how, after being in very prosperous circumstances, he was soon totally ruined? Well, the first time I saw the poor man come up to speak to your father when Mr. Filmer was present, that look came into the priest’s face.”

“Nay, it is you are prejudiced, Eda,” replied her cousin. “What offence could poor Hadyer have given to Father Peter, and how was he instrumental in his ruin?”

“His wife had been a Catholic, and became a Protestant the year before,” answered Eda. “How his ruin was brought about, I do not know; but I heard Mr. Filmer dissuade your father from granting what Hadyer asked, and which seemed to me but just and equitable. He said nothing in the man’s presence; but when he was gone, and he found your father was inclined to accede, he urged that if your father granted the remission of half a year’s rent to one farmer, on account of the flood which carried away double the value of corn, he would have some such accidents happening to some of the tenants every year.—But all this is irrelevant; Mr. Filmer loves him not—of that I am quite sure. We must seek other counsel, Edgar, and find means to prove Dudley’s innocence. There is one, I think, who can supply it, if she will, and you must go to her and seek it; for, if I am not mistaken,” and Eda smiled as she fixed her eyes upon him, “your voice will be more powerful with her than that of any other human being.”

“You mean dear Helen Clive,” replied Edgar. “Eda, you have made your confession; and mine is soon made. Helen Clive shall be my wife, whatever obstacles may stand in the way. She, too, would, if she could, I am sure, show sufficient justification for what Dudley did. It was an act of righteous vengeance upon as base a man as ever breathed.”

“What do you mean, Edgar?” exclaimed Eda Brandon, gazing at him as he spoke, with a flushed cheek and flashing eye. “You do not really believe that Dudley did kill this unhappy young man?”

“I do, Eda,” answered her cousin; “but listen to me.” And he proceeded to tell her all he knew—and it was but a part—of Lord Hadley’s conduct to Helen Clive. He spoke, too, of how he had himself, on the preceding morning, informed Dudley of the facts, acknowledged his own love for Helen, and asked the advice of his friend as to the course he ought to pursue.

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“He soothed, comforted, calmed me, Eda,” continued the young man; “and in the end, told me to leave the affair in his hands, and he would take care that my own dear, gentle Helen should be insulted no more. From the evidence given by the servants, it is clear that Dudley and the other had a bitter quarrel upon this very theme; that the wrongdoer was insolent in his wrong, and provoked his monitor more than patience could endure. Dudley is by nature fiery and impetuous, Eda, and depend upon it, they met last night; this base peer provoked his nobler friend; and Dudley struck a blow which, though unintentionally, punished him as he deserved.”

Eda mused sadly for a moment; but she then replied, “No, Edgar, no! Your father told me that Dudley solemnly denied the act. Were it as you say, he would not have done so. Impetuous he may be; but most decided in right and truth he is, and always has been. He would have told the tale of what had happened as it did happen; the act and the motive

would have stood forth clear together, and he would have left the rest to fate. But besides, I know he did not do it. He went out at my request, on business which nothing, I am sure, would have turned him from. The dinner was somewhat late, the hour named fast approaching, and I could see his anxiety to go. He would not, I know, have gone ten steps out of his way at that moment on any account whatever. No, Edgar, he did not do it; and Helen perhaps may help us to the proofs, for she must know who the men were that Dudley was to meet near Mead's farm. There were others about, too, I am sure, and by their testimony we may perhaps show, step by step, every yard of the way that Dudley took. Go to her, Edgar—go to her at once. Why do you shake your head?"

"Because, dear Eda, Helen is no longer within reach," replied Edgar Adelon; "she embarked last night with her father, who was implicated in this mad rising and attempt upon Barhampton."

Eda sat speechless with surprise and consternation. Her hope of proving Dudley's innocence had been based entirely upon the information which could be given by Helen Clive; and now to find that she was gone, and evidently to a distance, too, seemed to strike her with despair. From her uncle, and from the servants, she had gleaned a very accurate idea of all the evidence which had been given before the coroner's jury; and she had seen, from the first, the difficulties of her lover's situation, with far more alarm than he himself had felt; but her mind was quick and intelligent, and turned, after a temporary pause of consternation, to consider what was best next to be done.

"Fear not, Eda, dear," continued Edgar, seeing the expression of alarm upon her face; "I must soon hear where Helen is. She has promised to write to me whenever she arrives in France, and to let me know where she is to be found. At all events the priest must know."

“Stay, stay, Edgar,” said Eda. “Helen’s evidence would be too late. My uncle tells me the assizes will be held in ten days, and you must trust Mr. Filmer in nothing, Edgar. You think I am prejudiced, but it is not so. I know him, my dear cousin. But there is another way. If we could but find a person named Norries, he might assist us.”

“Why, that was the very leader of these men,” said Edgar, somewhat sharply. “I heard him myself harangue them two nights ago on the little green before the old priory, and he used my father’s name in a false and shameless manner.”

“Alas ! in too true a manner, Edgar,” answered Eda. “I must tell you all now, Edgar, for Dudley must not be sacrificed. His object in going out that night, was to save my uncle from participating in acts that may bring ruin on his head. Whether he succeeded in persuading him to desist or not, I do not know, for I did not dare to ask your father ; but be

assured, Edgar, that up to eight o'clock last night, it was Sir Arthur's intention to be present with, if not to lead, the people who attacked Barhampton. It was I who urged Dudley to go."

"But what could he do?" demanded Edgar. "You know my father in such circumstances attends to no advice."

"True," answered Eda; "but Dudley had a power over him, Edgar." And she proceeded to explain all that she herself knew of the dark transactions in which Sir Arthur Adelon had been engaged in former years. She put it gently and kindly, not as an accusation, but as an unfortunate fact; and she told how generously Dudley had promised at once, when he heard the means Norries had employed to urge her uncle forward on so fatal a course, that he would assure Sir Arthur, on his word of honour, to destroy the papers spoken of, without even looking at them.

Edgar's check at first flushed, and then

turned pale, and in the end, he covered his eyes with his hands, and remained buried in thought.

“Helen told me,” continued Eda, willing to lead his mind away from the more painful part of the subject, “that whoever I sent to seek my uncle would find some men waiting near the place called Mead’s farm. There were watches, she told me, along the whole line of road, and some of them surely saw Dudley pass. At all events, Norries can give information, if any one; and the only difficulty will be to find him.”

“I will find him,” cried Edgar Adelon, starting up; “but then,” he added, “perhaps he may have left the country too. I will seek him, however, let him be where he will, and find him if it be in human power to do so, for Dudley shall not suffer for his noble and generous devotion.”

“But let us consider, Edgar, how Norries can best be heard of,” said Eda; but Edgar

waved his hand with that bright, happy thing, the smile of youthful confidence, upon his face, and answered, "I will find him, dear girl—I will find him. I know several of the men who were with him. I recognised their faces at the priory; but I will about it at once, for there is no time to be lost."

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a dark and stormy night when Edgar Adelon, mounted upon a powerful horse, which seemed wearied with long travel, rode along towards a little village near the sea-coast, about twelve miles from Brandon. The rain beat hard upon him, dashing in his fair face, and almost blinding man and steed; the wind tossed about the curls of his fair hair like streamers round his head; neither great coat nor cloak sheltered his delicate form from the blast or the down-pouring deluge; but still he spurred on, seeming heedless of the tempest that raged around. He entered the street of

the village ; he passed the little alehouse, where there were lights and laughing voices within ; and he drew not a rein till he reached the last cottage but one upon the right hand side, before which he checked his horse suddenly, and sprang to the ground. Fastening the bridle round the paling, he went forward and knocked at the door, and then immediately lifted the latch and went in, saying, "Martin Oldkirk lives here, I believe?"

"A short, square-built, vigorous-looking man rose from the fire-side, and eyed him with a suspicious look as he entered. He had been reading a sort of newspaper, small in size and apparently badly printed, by the light of a single tallow candle ; but he instantly put the paper away, and shaded his eyes to examine the visitor.

"Yes," he said, at length, "my name is Martin Oldkirk. What do you want with me?"

"I want to speak a few words with you," answered Edgar Adelon, closing the door be-

hind him, and advancing to the table. "You know a gentleman of the name of Norries, I believe?"

The man hesitated, and then replied, "I have seen such a person, I've a notion. He called here once, but that's all."

"You know me, however, I suppose?" answered Edgar Adelon.

"Yes, I think I have seen you before somewhere," replied Oldkirk, with an indifferent air. "You are the baronet's son over at Brandon, I fancy."

"Exactly so," replied the young gentleman; "and Harry Graves, who works for Mr. Mead, told me that you could give me some information."

"What about?" demanded the man, abruptly.

"About this very Mr. Norries," answered Edgar Adelon, fixing his eyes upon him. "I have been eight days hunting him, and find, at last, that you are the only man who knows where he is."

“That’s a lie, at least !” answered the man, in an insolent and swaggering tone ; “and you may tell Harry Graves so for me.”

Edgar smothered his indignation at his companion’s brutality, and replied, “At all events you know where he is to be found, and you must tell me where he is, for I must speak to him immediately upon business of importance.”

“You wont hear from me,” answered the man, “for mayhap I do not know where he is. If you want him, you must find him for yourself.”

“No,” said Edgar, sternly. “You must find him for me, or if you don’t, you must take the consequences.”

“And what may they be ?” asked the labourer, with no less insolence in his manner, but with a contemptuous smile curling his lip at the same time.

“Why, simply, that I shall give you up to justice,” answered Edgar Adelon, “as one of the rioters who treasonably attacked the town of Barhampton.”

“You would find that difficult to prove,” answered the man, “because I was not there.”

“Not so difficult as you imagine,” answered the young gentleman. “I have the written testimony of three witnesses to show that you were present; and if you do not do what I require, depend upon it I will use those means to convict you.”

The man had taken two steps round the table, and he now sprang at once between Edgar and the door, exclaiming, “Then d—mn me if I don’t knock your brains out for your pains. I’m not to be bullied in that way.”

As he spoke, he was advancing upon the young gentleman; but when he was within not much more than two yards, Edgar suddenly drew a pistol from between his waistcoat and his shirt, where he had put it to keep it dry, and presented it at Oldkirk, cocking it at the same time with a loud click.

“I came prepared for all that,” he said, with a bitter smile. “They told me you were a

desperate fellow, and that they were all afraid to come near you. Take another step, and you are a dead man."

Martin Oldkirk paused, and gazed at him with a look in which a certain portion of admiration was joined with surprise. "Upon my life," he said, at length, "you're a brave little devil; but this is hardly fair, sir. Now, let us sit down and talk over the matter. I see what stuff you're made of, and I don't think you'd do what's wrong, or wish me to do so either."

"Well, keep your distance, then," said Edgar Adelon. "You are a stronger man than I am, and the pistol only puts us on a level. As to wishing you to do what's wrong, I have no such desire or intention. I wish you to do what is right, and that I will show you in a minute."

Oldkirk retreated to his former situation, and waited without reply for Edgar Adelon to go on. "You have heard me request you,"

said the young gentleman, seating himself opposite to him, "to tell, show, or lead me to the place where Mr. Norries lies concealed. Now, I have not the slightest intention whatsoever of injuring that gentleman in any way. No consideration would induce me to betray him; and I give you my word of honour that his secret shall be as safe with me as it is with you."

"Why, upon second thoughts," replied the peasant, "I should guess it would, seeing that that which hurts him might hurt your own father, Mr. Adelon; and mayhap it's about your father's affairs that you are going to speak with him."

Edgar shut his lips tight; and after a moment's pause, replied, "I know nothing of my father's affairs, Mr. Oldkirk, and I will not deceive you about it. My business with Mr. Norries has no connexion with my father whatsoever. I desire to speak with him in regard to matters which I am sure he takes some in-

terest in. A gentleman, a very dear and intimate friend of my own, has been apprehended and committed for trial, charged with an act which he did not commit, and in regard to which, I think, Mr. Norries may furnish some information which may be useful to my friend's defence."

"That he wont," replied Oldkirk, abruptly. "He'll inform against no one, I'll answer for it."

"You mistake and interrupt me," said Edgar Adelon, with a slight degree of haughtiness in his manner. "I neither expect nor desire that he should turn informer; but I think he may be able to give me the names of several persons who saw my friend on the night in question, and who can bear testimony to where he was at certain times, so as to prove that it was impossible he could commit the crime with which he is charged."

"That's another affair," said Martin Oldkirk; "and if you assure me, sir, upon your word of

honour, that you have no other object than this, I don't mind lending a hand ; but at the same time, you see, Mr. Adelon, when a thing is trusted to me by any persons, I mustn't tell other people anything about it till I have asked leave."

"That is fair enough," answered Edgar Adelon; "I pledge you my word of honour that I have no other object whatever in seeking Mr. Norries than that which I have stated; and I have no objection to tell you the circumstances of the case, in order that you may communicate them to Mr. Norries himself before he sees me."

"Oh, that's not needful, sir," replied the man. "I guess well enough what it is all about—this gentleman that is accused of killing the young lord up at Brandon, who was buried t'other day. I don't think you need trouble your head much about it, for every one knows well enough he didn't do it, and they'll never get a jury to condemn him; but for the matter

of that, I don't blame a gentleman who wants to help a friend, and an innocent man too, at a pinch like that. But you'll have a long way to go, sir, though it's all in your way home too."

"I do not mind how far it may be," answered Edgar, "nor whether it be in my way or not. Mr Norries I will see, and this very night, too, if it be possible. I am quite ready to go, if you are willing."

"Well, that's right," replied Oldkirk. "I like a man that's ready to do anything to serve a friend. So come along, we'll set to work at once; but you'll have to stay behind, maybe for ten minutes or so, while I ask leave. If I get it, well enough; if I don't get it, I suppose you and I are to have a tussle."

"I'll think of that as we go along," answered Edgar Adelon; "but, at all events, we'll have a truce till you come back again from your mission, and fair play on both parts, my good friend."

"Agreed," said Oldkirk. And putting up

his pistol in his breast again, the young gentleman followed him quietly out of the house, and taking his horse's bridle over his arm, walked on by the man's side in perfect confidence.

This conduct seemed to please him not a little, for he was much more conversible and open than he had been at first; but he still kept a guard upon his communications, taking care not to say a word which could lead his companion even to suspect where Norries lay concealed.

The way was long, and the drenching rain poured upon the two wayfarers, as amongst the narrow lanes and between the high hedgerows which distinguished the inland parts of that country, they wandered on for more than an hour. They passed one village, a hamlet, and some scattered houses; but Edgar, in his wanderings, had made himself acquainted with every rood of the country round Brandon, and he perceived that each step he took brought him nearer home. At length, Martin Oldkirk

stopped by the side of a little church at the distance of about five miles from the park, and said, "Now you must wait here for me, master, till I can get leave to bring you on. But you are very wet, and that's a bad thing for a genteel lad like you. If you like it, I can get you a glass of spirits from that farm-house there, where you see the light glimmering."

"It would, perhaps, be better for me to go in there and wait for you," replied Edgar; "for although I care little about bad weather, having been accustomed to brave it all my life, yet the rain dashing heavily in one's face is not pleasant."

"That will not do, sir," replied the man; "they might track us, if they saw you and me together."

"Well, then, I will put my horse under the yew tree, and go into the church porch," said the young gentleman; "spirits I do not drink, and shall do well enough without them."

"There are worse things on a wet night,"

answered the other ; and turning away, he left Edgar to follow his own course.

The church porch alluded to was a deep, old Norman projection from the face of a building, the greater part of which was of more modern date ; for successive churchwardens had each done his best to spoil, by additions and improvements, what had once been a small but very beautiful piece of architecture. There, however, under the round and richly moulded arches, Edgar Adelon found a temporary shelter, while an old yew tree, planted probably by Saxon hands, protected his horse from the fury of the storm. Time seemed to pass very slowly to his impatient spirit, and as the porch approached close to the road, he listened, though for some time in vain, for a coming step. At length one sounded at a distance, and in a minute or two more, his guide was at his side.

“ Well,” cried Edgar, eagerly, “ what news ? ”

“ It wont do, sir, to-night,” replied the man ;

"I was directed to tell you that you must not come on now, but that if you will be there to-morrow evening at nine, you will not only see him you want, but get all the information that he can give."

"It is very unfortunate," answered Edgar; "the assizes open the day after to-morrow; this trial will be one of the first, in all probability, and we shall have no time to prepare. But I will be wherever you will name, of course; or will you come and guide me?"

"I will be there waiting for you," said the other; "but you must swear not to say one word to any person which can lead people to find out where the gentleman is, on any account whatever."

"Most willingly," replied Edgar Adelon; "under no circumstances whatever, by word, or look, or sign, will I betray the place of his concealment, upon my honour."

"That will do," rejoined Oldkirk. "And now, to tell you where to come. I daresay you know the country pretty well?"

“O yes,” answered the young gentleman ;
“there are few parts within twenty miles round
where I could not find my way.”

“Well, then, do you know the old workhouse
at Langley ?” asked the countryman. “It stands
just at the back of the village.”

“Perfectly,” replied Edgar. “Am I to be
there ?”

“You will find me near the door at nine to-
morrow,” said Oldkirk. “And now, master, can
you find your road home ?”

“As easily as if it were broad day,” answered
his companion. “And now, Oldkirk, let me say,
I am sorry I used a threat towards you ; but
you must forgive it ; for when one is so deeply
interested as I am in proving the innocence of
a friend, one often says things one would not
say at another time.”

“There, don’t say any more about it,” replied
the other. “May be some day you may lend
me a hand, and that will clear all scores—so
good night, sir.”

Edgar bade him farewell, mounted his horse,

and spurred on towards Brandon, seeing not a living creature till he came within a hundred yards of the park gates. His heart was lightened, and his spirits, which had been greatly depressed, rose high at the thought of serving—nay, perhaps of saving, one for whom, from the first, he had in his young enthusiasm conceived the warmest friendship. The wind had somewhat abated, but the rain still continued when he approached the park, and the night was so dark that his horse was nearly upon a foot-passenger before he saw him. The person whom he overtook was walking slowly on, with an umbrella covering his head and shoulders; but the sound of the falling hoofs startled him, and made him jump aside just as Edgar checked his horse.

“Is that you, Edgar?” said Mr. Filmer, turning round; and Edgar immediately sprang to the ground, apologizing for having nearly ridden over him. “The truth is, father,” he said, “I was riding fast to catch dear Eda

before she goes to bed, and to tell her the tidings which have made me very joyful."

"Let me share them," said Father Filmer; "for if I judge rightly, they will be joyful to me, too."

"I am sure they will," cried Edgar, forgetting, in the light-heartedness of the moment, the caution which Eda had given. "By this time to-morrow, I trust to be able to prove Dudley's innocence beyond a doubt."

"That is indeed most satisfactory," answered the priest. "But are you quite sure, my young friend? Youth is apt to be sanguine — too sanguine, alas! not to meet with disappointment."

"I trust such will not be the case now," answered Edgar Adelon; "for at nine to-morrow I am to meet one who can give me information if he will."

Mr. Filmer was well aware that his hold upon the mind of the young gentleman who was now walking on beside him was much less

strong than that which he possessed over Daniel Connor, Sir Arthur Adelon, or even Mr. Clive. He knew that to attempt to force his secrets from him, by representing a full communication thereof to the priest in the light of a religious duty, would be at once treated by Edgar as a ridiculous assumption, and that he must therefore take a very different course with him from that which he had pursued with others; as, indeed, he had done, in addressing every one of the persons I have named above. To no two of them had he put forth exactly the same motives in exercising the influence which he possessed over them. The general line he took was still the same, indeed, though he modified his arguments to each individual; but now he was obliged, in a degree, to choose a new direction.

“I seek no confidence, my son,” he said, “but that which is voluntary. You have been a little reserved lately; but that matters not, though, perhaps, I might have aided you more than you know. When I ask you, therefore,

who is the person you have to meet, and where you are to meet him? I do not want you to tell me anything you may be disposed to conceal, and have only in view your own safety; for you must remember, Edgar, that these are somewhat dangerous times; and if I am not much mistaken, the people you have to deal with are rash and violent men, who will not scruple at anything which may serve their purpose."

"There is not the slightest danger," answered Edgar Adelon. "I know who and what they are quite well; and they know that I would not betray them for any consideration whatever. That which prevents me from telling you whom I am going to meet and where, is that which has hitherto prevented me from speaking with you as openly as I could wish—namely, that the affairs with which I have to do are not my own, and that other persons are compromised throughout the whole matter. I could not, therefore, in honour reveal to you

any of the particulars ; and in this case in particular, I am bound, by a most solemn promise, to discover nothing to any one."

"It is very well," replied the priest. "I have no curiosity ; and I shall be perfectly satisfied if you can prove that our young friend is totally innocent.—At nine to-morrow, did you say ? Well, may you be successful ; for I myself am quite sure of Mr. Dudley's innocence, and therefore trust it may be clearly established. You had better, therefore, mount again, and get home to your fair cousin as soon as possible, for I know she is very anxious—unnecessarily so, I believe ; but we must always make allowances."

Thus saying, he seemed to drop the subject ; and after walking a few steps farther with him, Edgar Adelon sprang once more into the saddle, and rode on towards Brandon Park.

CHAPTER IX.

By half-past eight o'clock Edgar Adelon was at the door of the old workhouse at Langley. The building had long been disused, but though not in the best order in the world, it could not be said to have fallen into decay. When a harsh and parsimonious law was substituted for one which was excellent in itself, but had been long and sadly misused; when poverty was first virtually pronounced criminal, and punished by statute; when the vices of the past, and the follies of rich magistrates, were visited upon the present generation, and upon the heads of the poor; when those whom God had joined together were put asunder by legislation, and

when a deputy parliament, irresponsible directly to the people, was created to make laws and regulations for those who are denied a voice in the senate, or a vote at an election ; when the medical attendance of the sick and the needy was first contracted for by scores, as bullocks and sheep are paid for at a toll-gate ; when charity put on a pedant's gown, and national benevolence was circumscribed by iron theories, the poor of Langley had been transferred to the union house, and the old workhouse had been put up to auction.

It was bought by a person who wished to establish a school—a wild, eccentric, clever philanthropist, who fancied that he could bend man's stubborn nature to his own Utopian schemes of excellence. The school, however, as might have been expected, proved a complete failure ; and after keeping it up for two years, he abandoned it in despair. No purchaser could be found to take the building off his hands ; and, leaving the charge of it to an old man and his wife, he spent a few pounds annually in checking the course of decay, but seemed to forget it altogether,

except when he paid the bills. There was a little space of ground round it, and a low wall; and within that wall Edgar Adelon now stood, waiting for the coming of his guide. He doubted not that the person he sought was to be discovered within the large, rambling old building; and finding that his impatient spirit had carried him thither a good deal before the time, he walked round it more than once, looking up to the windows, to see if he could discover the room which Norries inhabited. All was dark, however, except where, from a room on the ground floor, close to the door, streamed forth a solitary light; and, mounting the steps, the young gentleman looked in, and perceived the old man in charge and his wife, seated at their little fire. He now began to doubt that Norries was there. It might merely be a place of rendezvous, he thought; and as time wore on, he fancied that his guide was long in coming, and then that he would not come.

The night formed a strong contrast with the last—it was fine, and calm, and clear, and at length a step was heard at a good

distance, approaching rapidly. Edgar would not wait for the new-comer's approach, but went to meet him, and in a few minutes he could perceive the figure of Martin Oldkirk.

"Ay, sir, you are too soon," said the man. "I am before my time; but come on, and we shall soon find him we want.—Now, wait here for me a minute," he continued, when they reached the door of the workhouse; and walking round towards the back, he disappeared. After remaining impatiently for about five minutes. Edgar thought he heard a bolt withdrawn, and expected to gain admission; but the sound ceased again, and in an instant or two afterwards, he heard a step once more. The next moment the voice of Oldkirk called him; and he found the countryman standing at the western angle of the building.

"Stop a minute, Mr. Adelon," said the man; "are you very sure that you have not let out the secret to any one?"

"To no one upon earth," answered Edgar. "You surely do not suspect me of such baseness?"

“No, sir, I don’t suspect you of baseness, at all,” replied Oldkirk; “but young gentlemen will be imprudent sometimes.”

“I have not in this instance, at all events,” answered Edgar. “I have not said a word to anybody which could give the slightest idea of whither I was going when I came out.”

“It is strange enough,” answered the other, in a thoughtful tone. “There are two men and a little boy, standing talking together at this hour of night, at the corner of the lane. They seem to be doing nothing—I wonder what they can want?”

“Nothing connected with me, depend upon it,” answered Edgar, becoming somewhat impatient. “It seems to me nothing unusual that two men should be standing there talking.”

“But the boy comes from a place close by Brandon,” replied Oldkirk. “I dare say it is all right, however, so we had better go in;” and proceeding to the door, near which Edgar had been waiting, he opened it, first lifting the latch. The first room they came to was a little stone hall, where paupers had often waited for

their daily allowance of bread, or meat, or soup, or for medical aid; and there Edgar Adelon paused, while Oldkirk shut and bolted the door.

“Now we must find our way in the dark,” said the latter, as soon as he had completed his task. “It wont do to carry a light about here. Keep close behind me, sir.”

Following his footsteps, Edgar went forward through a door, which closed behind them with a weight and pulley, and then along a stone passage, at the end of which the man said, “Here are the stairs;” and mounting about twenty steps, they came to the upper story of the building. It seemed, as far as the young gentleman could judge, a strange, rambling sort of place, with rooms on the right hand and on the left, and paved passages between them, through several of which he was led, till at length, stopping suddenly, Oldkirk said, “I will wait for you here. Go straight on, sir, till you see a light shining through the key-hole of a door; just push that open and go in, but don’t be longer than you can help.”

Edgar followed his directions without reply; and a moment after, in a turn of the passage to the left, saw the light the man had spoken of, not only shining through the keyhole, but through a chink of the door, which was ajar. Pushing it open, as he had been told to do, he took a step forward, and a scene unpleasant and even painful was before him.

The room was a small square chamber, lined with squalid panelling, and floored, like the rest of the building, with stone. The rain of the preceding night had come through the roof at one corner, staining the ceiling and the walls. There was but one window, covered not only with a large moveable shutter, formed of planks of wood, but with a blanket, pinned up with two forks, so as to prevent the slightest ray of light from finding its way out through the crevices. The air felt hot and close, although there was neither fire nor fire-place, and the night was cold. In one corner was a bed, of the most humble description, without curtains, and by its side stood a chair and a table, the latter supporting several phials partly filled

with medicine, and a teacup, as well as a solitary tallow candle, with a long, unsnuffed wick, set in a large, dirty, tin candlestick. The bedding seemed to consist of a mattress or pal-liasse, part of which was apparent, two or three coarse rugs, and a sheet, with an ill-filled bolster, doubled up to support the head.

As soon as Edgar entered the room, the form of a man raised itself slowly and painfully up in the bed, supporting itself on the right arm, and a pair of hollow eyes gazed at him earnestly. The head was surrounded with a bandage, and the wild grey hair floated loose about it; while beneath appeared a countenance full of intelligence, but worn and haggard, apparently with sickness and suffering. The hue of robust health was totally gone; and the pale, yellow, waxy tint of the skin seemed more sallow from a black plaster down one cheek, and a gray and reddish beard of eight or nine days' growth. No one, probably, who had known Norries in health, would have recognised him at that moment; and Edgar Adelon, who had never seen him, except once as a boy,

imagined at first that there must be some mistake. Association, as it is called, is perhaps one of the most extraordinary phenomena of the human mind—not alone in the rapid power which it has of awakening recollection from the slumber of long years to the things of the past, but in the strange difference of the means by which it is itself excited. With one man it is a sight; with another, a sound; with another, an odour; with another, a taste, which calls up suddenly scenes, and circumstances, and persons, which have been long buried beneath the sand and rubbish of passing things in the course of years. With Edgar Adelon the exciting cause, in almost all instances, was sound; and the moment Mr. Norries spoke, he recollected his voice, and the place where he had last beheld him; and all that then took place flashed back upon his memory like a scene in a dream.

“Are you Mr. Adelon?” demanded the wounded man.

“The same,” answered Edgar.

“What! not the boy who came to call upon

Mr. Sherborne, with Sir Arthur Adelon, some six or seven years ago?" rejoined Norries. "How you are changed!"

"Greatly, I believe," replied Edgar; "but you are very much changed too, Mr. Norries, and I regret to see that the alteration has been effected by illness."

"Ay!" answered the other, gloomily, "they have brought the strong man to infant weakness, and the daring man to skulk in a hole like this. If others had been as resolute and as vigorous, the case would have been different. But I have not regrets for myself, Mr. Adelon. I regret that another opportunity has been lost for my country—an opportunity which may never return. I regret that my countrymen, in their feebleness and their timidity, have suffered the golden moment to slip from them, after boasting that they were ready to seize it, and to dare all odds to render it available to the common good. They fled, sir, like a flock of sheep, from a handful of men in red coats, and I am almost hopeless of them. I went down, it is true, almost at the first, with a bitter

wound in my side, and my horse shot under me; but if they had then rushed on—ay! though they had trampled the soul out of my body, they would have gained the day, and I would have blessed them. Nevertheless, the time may yet come, and I will live for it. Only one success, to give them confidence in themselves, to knit them together, to prove to them that they can fight and conquer if they will, and all is secure. It is the novelty of the thing that scares them—and those Frenchmen, too, who ran at the very first shot, what do they deserve? But I forget; we are rambling from the point.”

“You seem to have been badly wounded, indeed,” replied Edgar, as the sick man sunk back upon his pillow, exhausted with the stern vehemence of his own thoughts; “but tell me, Mr. Norries, have you proper attendance here? Such wounds as yours would need a skilful surgeon.”

“They were sharp ones,” answered Norries, “and not few; for I had just staggered up, and was calling some few stout hearts around me,

when the cavalry dashed in amongst us. One cut at me, and gashed my cheek, and another brought me down with a blow over the head. They passed on, thinking me dead ; and so I should have been very soon, if that brave fellow, Oldkirk, had not dragged me away, and, hiding me and himself in a dry ditch, bound up my wounds and stanchèd the blood. There has been many a man ennobled for a worse deed ; but he will have his reward here or hereafter. The people here are very kind to me, too. I saved their little property for them one time, by the few scraps of law I ever learned, and they are grateful—it is a marvel, as this world goes. I have a surgeon from a distant town, and I drink his drugs, and let him probe my wounds, and let him torture me as much as he will—not that I have any faith in him, but because it pleases the good people, who think that something is being done to serve me. I need no surgeon, Mr. Adelon, but nature and a strong constitution. Surgeons and lawyers, the craft is much the same ; the one tortures and destroys the body, the other the mind—

both rascally trades enough! But let us think of other things. You have been seeking me—why?”

“I thought Oldkirk had told you,” replied Edgar; “I gave him all the needful particulars last night.”

“He told me something of it,” answered Norries, “but not the whole. Besides, I forget. Lying here in this gloomy sickness, my thoughts wander over many things, like the dove of the deluge, finding no place to rest upon. Let me hear the business from your own lips.”

“It is very simple,” replied Edgar Adelon. “A friend, for whom I have more deep regard than I feel for any man living, is accused of having killed the young Lord Hadley on the very night of the attack upon Barhampton. He went out from Brandon at about eight o’clock, and was followed by that lord; they were seen passing the lodge, and walking on together in high dispute. Lord Hadley was brought home dead, having been struck over the cliff by some one whom the coroner’s jury choose to believe was my friend—not without some grounds, it is

true." And Edgar proceeded to detail the evidence given, dwelling minutely upon the circumstances, in order to show Norries the danger of the position in which Dudley was placed. "My friend," he continued, "declares that he went on to the very gates of Barhampton that night; that Lord Hadley parted from him at the spot where the path from the Grange crosses the high road, and that he never saw him after. He met several men near Mead's farm, it would seem; but we have reason to believe that there were others scattered along the whole line of road he took, and that some of them must have seen his parting from Lord Hadley, and be able to bear testimony to the fact. If you know, as we imagine, who these men were, and can give me information, so that their evidence may be obtained, I beseech you, Mr. Norries, to do so, for the lawyers who have been brought from London assure us that is the only hope of obtaining a favourable verdict for my friend Mr. Dudley."

"Mr. Dudley, the friend of one of the name of Adelon!" replied Norries, in a low, marvelling

tone; "that is a strange phenomenon! An Adelon strive to save a Dudley! That is stranger still. But true, your mother's was kindlier blood. Is your father aware of what you are doing?"

"My father is in London, detained by business of importance," answered Edgar; "but I know to what you allude, Mr. Norries. Some quarrel existed in former years between my father and Dudley's, but that is no reason for enmity between their children."

"A quarrel!" exclaimed Norries, raising himself again upon his arm. "Do you know, Mr. Adelon, that your father ruined his? Do you know—but no, you do not; I will tell you. Dudley's mother was your father's first love. They had been rivals for honours at school, at the university, and they then became rivals for her hand. Sir Arthur was encouraged by the mother, but Charles Dudley was accepted by the daughter. He was successful here, as he had always been before, and your father is not a man to forget such things, sir. He ruined him, I say."

“It is false!” exclaimed Edgar. “It cannot be true.”

“Not true!” cried Norries; “do you dare tell me it is not true?—But this is all vain—lying here, the veriest child might insult me at will. But I tell you it is true, and I have the papers which prove it. He waited long for his revenge, but it came at last. He took advantage of a temporary pressure on his enemy—a pressure caused by his own acts, and offered in kindly words to lend money on a mortgage, merely and solely for the purpose of getting Dudley’s title-deeds into his lawyer’s possession; for that cunning lawyer had taught him that there never was a title in which a flaw could not be found. It was all done by his directions—all done for one object. The flaw was soon discovered, the title disallowed, the secret told to the next heir, and Mr. Dudley ruined. I can prove it step by step, the whole machinations from the beginning to the end, for that lawyer was my partner, and the papers are now in my possession.”

“And you used them, Mr. Norries,” replied

Edgar, with a mixture of anger and sorrow in his tone, "to force my father on in a course which might be his ruin. Do not talk of ungenerous conduct, for surely this was not generous."

"I used them, sir," replied Norries, sternly, "to keep him to principles which he had long before asserted, to promote the deliverance of my country, to favour the people's right.—I have since regretted, perhaps, that I did so; for I am weak, like other men, and the result having been unfortunate, may wish I had not employed the means which the object justified. I ought to have given those letters to Mr. Dudley, and will do so now—if he and I both live. And now, sir, with that knowledge before you, I will help you to save the young man, if you please."

Edgar sat silent for a moment or two, with his eyes bent fixedly upon the wall, and Norries at last asked, "What say you—would you save him?"

"Assuredly!" replied Edgar Adelon, with a start; "can you doubt it? Whatever be the

consequences, can you suppose that I would hesitate to deliver my friend, or that I would see an innocent man suffer for a crime in which he had no share ?”

“Then you are one of the noble and the true,” replied Norries, warmly ; “one of the few, the very, very few. Give me your hand, Mr. Adelon ; and forgive me that I have pained you by such sorrowful truths.”

Edgar gave him his hand, but turned away his head with a sigh, and Norries continued. “That every word I have uttered is true, you shall have proof,” he said. “If I live, I will show you those letters.”

“No !” answered Edgar, sharply ; “I will not look into one page of them. He is my father, sir, whatever he have done. To me he has no faults, nor would I willingly see any in his conduct to other men. If you will aid me to prove Dudley’s innocence, Mr. Norries, I will thank you most deeply ; but say no more to me of my father or my father’s acts.”

“So be it,” answered Norries ; “to Mr.

Dudley's business, then. First, be sure he did not kill Lord Hadley. I may know—or at least guess, who did. But of that I can prove nothing. Secondly, there was but one man, as far as I recollect, near the spot where the two roads cross. My memory of that night is somewhat indistinct, indeed, and there may have been two. One certainly was Edward Lane, the blacksmith; the other a man named Herries, living near Brampton, but I am not sure of his station. Seek out Lane first, and tell him I sent you to him with my request that he will voluntarily tender his evidence. He must make some excuse for being there at that hour of the night. He is resolute and bold, but somewhat wrong-headed, and you may have trouble with him, though I think my name will satisfy him. The other man will tell you at once if he was there or not, if you but say that I desire it. Tell Mr. Dudley, for me, too, that I regret much what has happened, and that I cannot serve him farther. You say that he went as far as the gates of Barhampton—I know not what could bring him thither, and

assuredly I did not see him there; but that is no marvel, for I had much to do."

"He went upon a kindly errand, Mr. Norries," replied Edgar, "and certainly was there, for he said it, and Dudley's word is not to be doubted; but I will detain you no longer to-night, as you seem exhausted, and perhaps our conversation has been too long already. I thank you much for the information you have given me, and I am sure Dudley will be grateful also." Thus saying, the young gentleman shook hands with the sick man, and left him.

CHAPTER X.

AT the end of the stone passage, Edgar found Martin Oldkirk waiting for him ; and proceeding in silence, they issued forth from the old workhouse, but not by the front entrance, passing through a small door at the back, the key of which the countryman seemed to possess for his own private use, as he put it in his pocket after having turned it in the lock. As soon as they were a few steps from the building, Edgar turned towards his companion, saying, "I must find Lane, the blacksmith, to-night. I suppose my shortest way is through Langley?"

"No, sir," answered Oldkirk, "I will show you a shorter way than that ; and I had better

go with you too, for if I don't, you'll not make much of Edward Lane. We must take the first turning through the fields; there's a style a couple of hundred yards up."

Without reply, Edgar proceeded along the road; and they had nearly reached the style of which Oldkirk spoke, when four or five men and a little boy sprang out from the hedge upon them. Two of them seized Edgar by the collar; and though he made an effort to shake himself free, it is probable he would have offered no violent resistance if Oldkirk had not struck violently right and left, knocking down one of the assailants, and severely hurting another. The men struck again in their own defence, and a general scuffle took place, in the midst of which, without knowing from what hand it came, Edgar received a severe blow on the head from a stick. The fire flashed from his eyes, his brain seemed to reel, and, everything passing from his sight, he fell senseless to the ground.

When Mr. Adelon recovered his recollection, he could not for some minutes conceive where

he was, for all the objects around were new and strange to him. He was stretched upon a bed in a large but low-roofed room, with a woman and two men standing by him, and applying some cold lotions to his head. His brain seemed confused and dizzy, and a violent aching pain over his brows showed him that he had been very severely handled. The remembrance of all that had occurred came back to him almost immediately ; and turning to one of the men, he demanded where he was, and why he had been so assaulted.

“ You are at Farmer Grange’s for the present, master,” replied the man ; “ and no one would have hurt you if you had not resisted. We came out to get hold of a party of those Chartists who are charged with being concerned in that business at Barhampton, and if you choose to go consorting with them, you must take the consequences.”

“ Have you a warrant ?” demanded Edgar, raising himself on the bed.

“ We’ve got warrants against five or six on ’em,” answered the man—“ Martin Oldkirk, Neddy Lane, Eaton, and others.”

“Have you a warrant against me?” demanded Edgar; “though I need not ask the question, for I know very well you have not.”

“As to that, I can’t say,” was the man’s answer, “for I don’t know who you are yet; but you were consorting with one of ’em, at all events.”

“You know very well that I am Sir Arthur Adelon’s son,” replied the young gentleman; “and I demand that you show me your warrant against me. If you have one, I shall submit to the law, of course; but if you have not, I insist upon your suffering me to go home directly.”

“That I shan’t do, you may be sure,” said the man. “I don’t know who you are, or anything about you; and I shall wait till the constable of the hundred comes back, at all events. He’s gone to Barhampton to find a surgeon for your head, that you would have broke, whether we liked it or no. He wont be long, I dare say, and you must stay quiet till he returns.”

Resistance would be in vain Edgar well

knew, and he was forced to submit, though most unwillingly; but gradually a stronger power mastered him. Violent and general headache came on, a sensation of feverish languor spread over his limbs, and by the time that the little clock which was ticking against the wall struck two, he felt that he was almost incapable of moving.

In about half an hour after, the head constable of the hundred came back from Barhampton, with the surgeon who was accustomed to attend Sir Arthur Adelon's family; and after examining his patient's head, and having felt his pulse, asking two or three questions at the same time as to what sensations he experienced, he drew forth his lancet, and proceeded, according to the old practice, to bleed his patient largely. Whether the custom of so doing be good or not, Edgar Adelon certainly felt great relief, though a degree of faint drowsiness spread over him at the same time. To his inquiry as to whether he could not be moved to Brandon, the surgeon shook his head, saying, "Impossible;" and Edgar then pro-

ceeded to complain of the manner in which he he had been treated by the constable and those who accompanied him. In the midst of his statement, however, the overpowering sensation of weariness which he felt prevailed over even anger on his own account and anxiety for his friend, his eyelids dropped heavily once or twice, and he fell into a profound sleep.

When he woke on the following morning it was broad daylight, and he found Mr. Filmer sitting by his bedside. His head still ached, but he felt better than on the preceding night, and a long explanation ensued as to the occurrences which had brought him into the state in which Mr. Filmer found him. As it was clear no warrant was out against him, and the men who had apprehended him had retired from the farm house, somewhat apprehensive of the consequences of what they had done, Edgar expressed his determination to rise immediately, and pursue the object which he had in view when he was seized. He explained in general terms to his companion the nature of the business he was upon; and no arguments

of the priest, bearing upon the state of his own health, and the danger of the step he proposed, would have had any effect, had not Mr. Filmer added the assurance that Mr. Dudley's trial would not come on for several days, as he had received intimation that very morning that it was far down on the list, and that all the Chartists who had been taken at Barhampton were to be proceeded against in the first instance.

"Besides, Edgar," he said, "the object you have in view can perhaps be more easily attained. If you will tell me the name of the man you are seeking, I will go to him myself, and find means, one way or another, to bring him hither to speak with you."

The idea seemed to Edgar a good one, for in truth he felt little equal to the task, and after a few words more of explanation, Mr. Filmer set out upon his errand. As he went, Edgar turned his eyes towards the clock, and perceived to his surprise that it was nearly noon; but the priest did not return till the sky was beginning to grow grey, and then brought

the unpleasant intelligence that Edward Lane was nowhere to be found.

"He has probably heard of there being a warrant out against him," Mr. Filmer said, "and has concealed himself till these assizes are over; knowing well, as we all know, that it is one of the bad customs of this country, whatever be the government, to let political offenders off easily if they avoid the first pursuit of justice, while those who are early apprehended, have the law administered not only with strictness but with passion."

"I must find him, at all events," said Edgar, "and that speedily."

"I shall know where he is by to-morrow morning," replied Mr. Filmer, with a meaning smile. "I have directed several shrewd and trustworthy members of my own flock, who know him well, to obtain information, and communicate it to me at once. I will then let you know, my dear son. So make your mind easy, for not an hour shall elapse, after I have received the intelligence, before it is in your possession."

Again Edgar Adelon suffered himself to be tranquillized by assurances which would have had no effect, had he not been enfeebled by illness. The next morning when he woke his headache was gone, and his mind was fresh and clear, but he still felt very feeble, and willingly laid in bed till the good farmer's wife brought his breakfast, and the hour appointed for the surgeon's visit had nearly come. He wondered, indeed, that Mr. Filmer had not been with him, that Eda had neither come nor sent; and the doubts which she had raised regarding the sincerity of the priest began to recur unpleasantly to his mind. He became uneasy, restless; and when the medical man at length arrived, three quarters of an hour after his time, he shook his head, saying, "You are not quite so well to-day, Mr. Adelon, and must remain perfectly quiet."

"It is lying here idle," answered Edgar Adelon, "when I have many important things to do. I should be quite well were I up."

"You must rise on no account to-day," replied the surgeon; "and, indeed, I am very

glad to find that you did not get up, which I almost anticipated you might do, as I am a little later than the hour I appointed. I know your impatient spirit of old, my young friend." And he smiled facetiously.

"I certainly thought you never would come," replied Edgar; and the surgeon, fearful that he might have given some offence to the son of a wealthy patient, hastened to explain. "The fact is," he said, "that I was anxious to hear the trial of some of these Chartists, and rode over to —— early this morning. I was detained, however, longer than I expected, by a poor woman who is suffering under ——"

"But what came of them?" exclaimed Edgar Adelon, eagerly, well knowing that when the worthy gentleman got upon an interesting case there was no end of it. "The Chartists, I mean. Were any of the trials over?"

"Oh, no!" answered the surgeon. "Their trials are put off till the next assizes. The case of your acquaintance, Mr. Dudley, was just coming on. I should have stayed to hear it if I had had time; but as I promised to be over

here by eleven, I hurried away, otherwise I would have brought you all the news."

He spoke in the most common-place tone in the world; and Edgar at that moment hated him mortally; but he said not another word, and kept his eyes shut almost all the time that his surgeon remained, as if he were inclined to go to sleep again. As soon as the man of healing was gone, however, he sprang up in his bed, hurried on his clothes, and without even waiting to wash himself or brush his hair, surprised the good woman of the house by appearing in the kitchen of the farm.

"La, sir!" she exclaimed, "I am glad to see you up again. I hope you're better."

"Oh! yes, quite well now, thank you, Mrs. Grange," replied the young gentleman, with a swimming head and a feeling of faint weakness in all his limbs. "I am going out to take a ride, if your husband will lend me a horse."

"That he will, I am sure, sir," answered the farmer's wife; and running to the window of the kitchen, she screamed out into the yard, "Grange! Grange! here is Mr. Adelon

quite well again, and wants you to lend him your nag to take a ride."

"Certainly, mother," answered the farmer, coming out of a barn on the opposite side of the court. "When will he like him?"

"Directly," answered Edgar Adelon, eagerly, and speaking over the good woman's shoulder; "it will refresh me and do me good."

"He shall be up in a minute, then, sir," answered the farmer. "I am glad to see you well again. I'll just take some of the hair off his heels, and comb out his mane a bit——"

But Edgar did not stay to hear more, and hurrying back into the room to which he had been first taken, sought for his hat, which he found sadly battered and soiled. Without waiting even to brush off the dirt, he proceeded at once to cut short the farmer's unnecessary preparations, and mounting the horse, as soon as he could obtain it, rode away at a quick trot towards the county town. He knew not what he sought; he had no definite object in going; but he felt that he had been deceived, that he had been kept in idleness, while the

fate of his friend was in jeopardy, and his impatience increased every moment, till the farmer's nag was pushed into an unwonted gallop. He slackened his pace a little, it is true, as he entered the town, but still rode very fast to an inn close by the courts, and ringing the bell furiously, gave his horse to the hostler.

In a few moments he was pushing his way through the crowd in the entrance, and the next instant he caught sight of Dudley, standing with his arms crossed upon his chest, and his eyes fixed upon the jury-box. His brow was calm, but very stern; there was no fear in his fine eyes, but they were grave, even to sadness. On the opposite side were the jury, with their foreman leaning a little forward; and at the same instant a voice, coming from just below the bench, demanded, in a loud tone, "How say you, gentlemen of the jury—Guilty, or not guilty?"

"Guilty of manslaughter, my lord," replied the foreman.

The eyes of Edgar Adelon turned dim, his brain reeled, and he fell back amongst the crowd, without uttering a word.

CHAPTER XI.

Two years had passed.

Two years !—What is it ? who can say ? Different to every being in the whole wide range of universal existence, Time is the true chameleon, and takes its colour entirely from the things through which it glides. Now grey and dull, now bright and shining, now purple with the mingled hues of exertion and success, rosy with love and hope, or azure with faith and confidence !—Years, what are they ? Nothing, for to many they have no existence ; mere spots in the wide ocean of eternity, which realize the mathematician's utmost abstraction when he defines a point as that which hath no parts, or

which hath no magnitude — neither length, breadth, nor thickness. Yet to others how important are years—how full of events, and feelings, and actions! How often is it that, in that short space of two years, a life is crowded; so that when we look back at the end of mortal existence, there—gathered into those four and twenty months—stands out the whole of active being, and all the rest is idleness and emptiness, the broad selvages of the narrow strip of cloth.

Two years, too, viewed from different positions in the wide plain of life, how different do they appear! The prospective and the retrospective changes them entirely. It is the looking up and looking down a hill, for the perspective of time is very different from that of substantial objects. The vanishing point comes close to the eye when we gaze back; is far, far removed when we gaze forward. At every period of life, too, it changes, and with every feeling of the heart, with every passion of our nature. To the young man, the two years just passed stretch far away, filled with incidents and sensations

all bright in their novelty, and vivid to the eye of memory. To the old man, they are but a space, and that space empty. He hardly believes that the time has flown which has brought him two strides nearer to the grave. Say to the eager and impetuous youth, two years must pass before you can possess her whom you love, and you spread out an eternity before him, full of dangers and disappointments. Tell the timid clinger to life's frail thread, you can but live two years longer, and the termination seems at the very door. Pain, pleasure, hope, fear, thought, study, care, anxiety, our moral habits, our corporeal sensations, our thirsty wishes, our replete indifference—all contract or expand the elastic sphere of time, and we find at last that it is but a phantasm, the sole existence of which is in change.

The sun, and the moon, and the stars, were given, we are told, to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years; and regularity was given to their motions, that order might be in variety; but variety is not less infinite because all is rendered harmonious, and

regular recurrence only serves to work out spaces in the ever teeming progress of change. It is not alone, that the vast whole does not present at any time two things exactly alike ; but it is that all things in that whole, and the whole itself, are altering in every instant, and every fraction of an instant, which gives us the infinity of variety. All is in movement, upon, throughout, and round the earth. All is undergoing change, but it is the vastness, the violence, the rapidity of that change, which marks time, or, in other words, marks the march of the shadow.

Two years had passed with their changes, and of those I shall speak hereafter. Suns had set and risen, day and night had been, months had succeeded weeks, hearts were cold that were then warm, eyes were dim that were then bright, the shade of grey had come upon the glossy hair, sickness and health had changed places in many a frame, states had seen revolutions, men had perished and been born, vice and virtue had triumphed or had failed, monarchs had died, and good and wise men passed away, shipwreck and flame, and war

and pestilence, and accident and sorrow, had done their part, and bursting forth again from a thousand different sources, the teeming life of earth had sprung up and glittered in the sun, as if but the more abundant for that which had been abstracted from it. The world had grown older, but not less full; and those who had aided the work, and had undergone the change, were hardly conscious that it had taken place.

Two years had passed.

CHAPTER XII.

It was evening. The sky was of a deep purple, seldom seen in any part of the northern hemisphere. There was a line of light upon the western sky, not yellow, not red—I know not the name of the colour—it was dying-day colour—the last gleam of the eyes of expiring light. Everything was solemn and grand. There was a deep stillness in the air—a vastness in the wide expanse—a profundity in the hues of every object—a silence and a grandeur in the whole, that sank into the soul, and filled the mind with imaginings melancholy though grand. One might stand there, and fancy oneself the first or the last of created beings upon

earth, with the first or the last sunset before him.

It was a mountain-top, high over the flat lands around, starting up from the scrub abrupt and precipitous, and wherever the eye turned there was neither road, nor living thing, nor human habitation. Not an insect was heard—there was no wind in the heavens—the trees rested motionless—not a lizard was seen upon the rocks. Dark waves of magnificent vegetation flowed away like a sea from the feet, and a distant glimpse of the Austral Ocean, with the light of the sinking sun skipping along over its vast solitary bosom, was the only thing that relieved the magnificent monotony; and yet it was a sea without a sail—without an oar.

Ten steps farther, and the summit will be gained!

The ten steps were taken, and then all was changed. Another scene broke upon the view, infinite in its variety, magnificent in its colouring, and varied by life. But what life? Not that of man—not that of any creature which holds familiar intercourse with him.

The savage beast and the wild bird of the wilderness were there ; but neither flocks, nor herds, nor hut, nor mansion, nor anything to show that the human foot had ever pressed before that beautiful and awful scene.

There, in centuries long past, had flamed the wild volcano, lifting up its beacon-tower of flame over the untravelled seas of the far south. There had poured the torrent of the red lava—there had heaved and panted the earthquake ere the fire burst forth—there, perhaps, from the depth of the ocean, had been hurled up—in the last fierce struggle which burst the gates of the prison-house, and set free the raging spirit of the flame—the mighty masses of rock piled upon rock, precipice above precipice, coral and lava, limestone and basalt, the floorwork of the waters mingling in rifted masses with the barriers that hemmed it in, and all cemented together by a stream of manifold materials fused in the internal fire.

Towering up in wild, irregular walls, assuming strange shapes, but everywhere gigantic in size, the crags of lava surrounded a vast, profound basin, the crater of the extinct

volcano. Precipice upon precipice, jagged rock rising beside jagged rock, formed the ramparts and the embrasures of the desert fortress; and the eye of the wanderer, as he looked down, caught suddenly a scene the most opposite, in the hollow space below, where soft green turf, of the richest verdure, carpeted the bosom of the cavity, till it reached the brink of the deep, dark lake that filled up half the expanse.

Opposite, and surrounding about three quarters of the lake, rose precipitous cliffs of pure white coral, some seventy or eighty feet in height, looking down into, and reflected from the waters; and, as if to make them harmonize with the solemn gloom of that still tarn, every here and there a large white bird skimmed over the waves, and carried a line of light along with it.

There was something which moved, too, under the nearest clump of tall trees, which were scattered wide apart over the carpet of verdure; but a mass of rock, which rolled down from the wanderer's foot, scared the creature which had

caught his eye, and its wild and enormous bounds showed him in an instant that it was not, as he had fancied and feared, a human being like himself.

He had but little cause to fear. Never had the spot been visited by anything in the form of a man, unless it were the wildest and lowest of the race—the Australian savage—and that but rarely, if at all. Amidst the solitary peaks of Mount Gambier he stood alone; perhaps the first since the creation who ever set a foot-step there.

As he gazed towards the west, the sun sank, and a greenish shade spread over the blue. He cast his eyes over the land through which he had lately passed—it was all one grey, indistinct mass. He looked down into the vast hollow of the hills; the colouring had suddenly faded, and darkness filled the chasm. But then, as if in compensation, the moment after came forth the stars, large and lustrous, bursting forth all at once, and spangling both the bosom of the heaven and the deep waters of the lake below.

“Here will I live or die,” said the wanderer ;
“it matters not which.” And placing his
bundle under his head, he laid himself down
beneath the edge of the rock, and gazed up
towards the sky.

CHAPTER XIII.

A HEAVY dew fell during the night, and when the wanderer, whom we have seen climb that steep hill on the preceding evening, woke on the following day, his clothes were full of moisture, and his limbs felt stiff and weary. If he had desponded on the night before, it was well nigh despair that he now felt. He rose slowly, and gazed over the scene around him—the vast voiceless solitude—and there was no comfort in it. He felt the spirit of desolation spreading its icy influence more and more strongly every moment over his heart, and he knew that if he gave way to it, even in the least, it would over-

whelm him entirely, would put out strength and effort, hope, action, life itself. And yet he scarcely knew why he should struggle; the voice of despair still asked him what he had to live for. Every earthly object of existence seemed gone; why should he struggle to preserve that which had become valueless? "Who would covet," he asked himself, "the possession of a desert, and what is life to me but one tract of arid barrenness!"

Strange, when the mood is nicely balanced, how small a grain of dust will turn the scale! A memory came upon him as the words passed his lips, a memory of early years, when, in the wanton spirit of youth—almost of boyhood, he had pictured to himself the free life of the children of Ishmael as an object of wild desire; and now he asked himself, "Who would covet the possession of a desert?" He recollected how he had dreamed of scouring the wide sands upon his fleet steed, climbing the red rocks, resting in his light tent, and living a life of free enjoyment and unrestrained exertion. The remembrance changed the current of his

feelings, and gazing forth over the scene around, lit up and brightened with the rising sun, he asked himself another question—"Why should I not, in the midst of this vast and beautiful solitude, realize those visions of my early youth?"

Alas! long since then, experience and passion, and many a sweet and many a bitter lesson, had placed in his hands the keys of other enjoyments. He had tasted the food which makes early pleasures insipid; and when he thought again of those very simple dreams, he felt that there would be something wanting even in their fulfilment. Where were the friendly and the kind? Where were the bright and beloved? Where were the dear companionships? Where the elevating society? Where the food for the thoughts? Where the employment for the mind? Above all, where was the honoured name, the respect, the esteem which had once been his? And he felt too bitterly that what has been must still be had, even for peace—that it is deprivation, not denial of joys, that is unhappiness. Could he

consent to live on in such circumstances? Was there anything within the scope of probability which could make life endurable? Could he debase himself to the sordid joys of those around him? Could he live a life of slavery and labour, with that barrier placed at the end of the course of exertion and obedience, which limited the utmost range of hope and expectation to free association with the low, the vile, and the base; to the accumulation, perhaps, of dross; to become a great man amongst the meanest of his race? That was not to be thought of; and what was the alternative? To live a roving life in the bush, companionless, if not with savages the most debased and barbarous of the human race—to fly the face of civilized man as a pestilence—to have neither acquaintances, nor friends—no social life—no love. Solitude, solitude!—It is a lovely thing to abstract contemplation. The mind of man, not called upon to try the vast experiment, looks upon it, as upon every great endeavour—as bringing a reward with it equal to the difficulties and the impediments; but brought nearer,

placed within the reach of effort, we cannot grapple with the mighty task. The feeble heart shrinks from it ; the firm mind doubts and hesitates. We feel how sad and terrible it is to be alone ; we learn that it is the antithesis of our nature.

It were better to die, he thought. There were hopes beyond the grave, which taught him that death was not solitude. That kindly voices would hail his coming. That, purified from all earthly imperfections, friendships high and holy—the friendships of the just made perfect—would console him for the loss of earthly esteem. But in life there was love, too—human, passionate love ; and when he asked himself, what was to make up for that, the mind paused and pondered.

Let us not blame him, that he was still a being of clay ; that he could not shake off the affections of this earth ; that he could not altogether wish to die, while affections, deep and strong, bound him to the state of being in which God had placed him. That was the only tie to life yet left unsevered ; but, as the last, it was

the strongest. He had often thought of these things before. He had often asked himself, "Will she, too, believe me guilty? Will she cast me from her heart, as society has cast me from its bosom? Will she forget me? Will she wed another?" And the deep love within his breast, imaging that of another, had ever answered, "No, no, no! It cannot be."

The same voice was still strong, but yet there was a languor, a depression spreading over his whole frame, which dulled his ear even to the voice of the syren, Hope. Though she might love him, said Despair, what chance did there exist of his ever seeing her again? Condemned for life, unable to return, marked out as a felon, sent as a convict to a distant land, without means, without object in return, what could he do? His heart sunk at the thought. He must wither out there—there, in the midst of that wild solitude, falling back daily, as the progress of man advanced, to avoid recognition and fresh anguish.

He thought not, it is true, of raising his hand against his own life; such a purpose

never presented itself as a temptation. He had too much faith ; but he felt disposed to give up all exertion, to yield without a struggle to his adverse fate, to lay himself down and die. Still, however, one voice said, "Live !" and the last spark of human hope was fanned into a flame, faint, but yet sufficient to light him to exertion.

With feeble hands and weary limbs he opened the knapsack which he had brought thither, took out the axe which was strapped upon the top, and then from the inside drew slowly forth some lines and fish-hooks, saying to himself, "The good old man thought he bestowed an invaluable present on me when he gave the means of supporting life, but yet I could hardly feel grateful for the gift. I will not hesitate, however, between two courses, and as I have determined to live, will make an effort to save life."

In truth, he knew not well how to set about his task. The first thing, indeed, was to build himself a cabin ; and choosing out an indentation of the rock, through which no wet seemed

to have percolated, he resolved to fix his residence there, at least for the first; by doing which he was likely to spare much labour, enclosing it only on one side. He chose young and slight trees from amongst the infinity which grew around, and sharpened some of them for palisades, after he had hewn them down with the axe; but ere he had half completed even the necessary preparations, he felt faint and weary; and though not hungry, he resolved to see if he could procure some food to renew his strength.

Choosing out a thin and pliant sapling, he descended towards the bank of the lake slowly and with great difficulty, for the precipices were tremendous, and the natural paths few. At length, however, he accomplished it. And then came the question, when he reached the brink of the clear and limpid waters, of what was to be his bait? The sorrow which approaches despair is often bitterly imaginative; and as he sat with his head resting on his hand, and pondered, he thought of all the baits with which man is angled for and caught by

his great enemy in the world ; and oftentimes a rueful smile came upon his fine but worn countenance, in which he himself, and passages in his past existence, shared the sarcasm with his fellow men.

The sun rose while he thus wasted time, and pouring into the crater, filled it with ardent light. He felt very thirsty, and kneeling down upon the brink, which was covered with soft turf, he drank of the clear wave. As he did so, a large fly, of a peculiar golden colour, skimming away, settled on the face of the windless waters at a short distance, and instantly a fish, springing half out of the lake, enclosed it within its voracious jaws. "We are all destroyers," thought the wanderer ; and looking along the banks, he caught one of the same insects, fastened it to the hook upon his line, the line to the rod, and cast the baited snare upon the clear bosom of the water. The living objects of man's chase have doubtless their traditions ; but the fish of that lake had never been taught human guile, and the instant the hook touched the water a large animal was upon it. To draw

it to the shore cost the weak and weary man a considerable effort; but another and another, both considerably smaller, were soon after taken; and, satisfied with his spoil, he slowly ascended the steep paths again towards the place where he had commenced building his hut.

He had observed at that spot a tree, some of the branches of which had been shivered by the lightning, and with these he contrived to light a fire, and prepare his meal. After partaking of it frugally, he once more set to work again, to construct a dwelling which would give him a shelter from the not unfrequent storms of that land, and afford a defence against wild beasts, or wilder men, during the night.

It was, as may well be conceived, of the rudest and the simplest kind. The stakes he planted side by side, at a short distance from the rock, where a ledge of coral, projecting at the height of seven feet, overhung the turf about two yards, and formed a sort of roof. The door puzzled him greatly; for though he remembered well the expedients of the solitary mariner in Juan Fernandez, and often in thought

drew a comparison between his own fate and that of Crusoe, yet he was destitute of many of the implements which the other had possessed. His axe and two gimlets had been given him in compassion by an old inhabitant of a very distant part of the colony, and these, with a large knife, formed all his store of tools. When the palisade was up, however, and the space, left open at first between the edge of the ledge and the top of the posts, had been covered over with twisted branches, the little strength which had been left was exhausted, and he lay down to rest beneath the shelter of a blackwood tree. Weariness and heat soon produced their usual effect, and he slept.

It was about three o'clock. His rod and fishing line lay beside him, as well as the axe with which he had worked, and the chips and fragments of the small trees he had cut down were scattered all around. He had slept for a full hour; and during that time a change, to him of considerable importance, had taken place in the scene. No human eye beheld it, but a large bird of prey, which was

soaring aloft over the heights of Mount Gambier, saw a party ride rapidly through the plains below, and halt upon the first acclivity of the mountain. It consisted of six persons, only one of whom seemed of superior rank. There were, however, nine horses, three of which carried heavy burdens, consisting of sacks, bags, and cases. Each of the horsemen had a gun over his shoulder; and, as soon as they had drawn the rein, they sprang to the ground, and commenced unloading the baggage, amongst which was found a small tent, requiring nothing for its erection but one of those poles that were easily to be procured in the neighbouring woods.

“We shall have plenty of time to go up and come down again before it is dark,” said the chief person of the party, speaking to one who seemed to be a servant. “Give me the other gun, Maclean. We may get some specimens. I must have some more caps, too, for these will not fit it.”

After a few more words and directions to the other men, the leader and two more com-

menced the ascent of the hill, which, from the spot they had already reached to the summit, did not occupy more than three-quarters of an hour, and then the stranger turned round and gazed, saying to himself, "How magnificent!"

"I think we had better get on, Captain," said his servant, Maclean. "The sun's getting down, and we shan't have much time."

"Pooh, nonsense!" answered the other, looking at his chronometer; "it is only a few minutes past four. This is the twenty-first of December, midsummer day, and we shall have light till half-past nine or longer."

"We are a good bit farther north than we were at Hobart Town five days ago, sir," replied the servant, seeing that his master still paused to gaze; "and you will not have so much light as you think for."

"Well, it does not much matter," answered the officer, a good-looking young man, with a very intelligent and benevolent expression of countenance. "We can find our way down, I dare say, even in the dusk, especially if they light a fire to cook the kangaroo." He paused

for a moment, and then said, in a meditative tone, "I dare say we are the first human beings—certainly the first Europeans, who ever set their feet upon this hill."

"I don't think it, sir," replied Maclean, who had taken a step or two nearer to the high, precipitous rocks which surrounded the vast crater.

"Indeed!" exclaimed his master. "What makes you think so, my good friend?"

"That, Captain," answered the man, pointing with his finger to a spot on the ground, a little to the right of himself and his master, on which, when Captain M—— turned his eyes that way, he saw lying a scrap of paper with something written upon it. On taking it up, he found that it was part of the back of a letter, with the English post-mark distinct upon it. The writing consisted only of a few words, or rather fragments of words, being a portion of the original address, and it stood thus—"dley, Esq.—Brandon House—onshire."

It signified very little to the eyes that saw it, for he knew not where Brandon House was,

nor anything about it; but yet what strange feelings did the sight of that letter call up in his breast. Where was the writer? Where the receiver of that letter? Who could he be? What had become of him? What brought him there?—were questions which the mind asked instantly, with a degree of interest which no one can conceive who has not stood many thousand miles from his own land, and suddenly had it and all its associations brought up by some trifling incident like this that I relate.

Putting his gun under his arm, and holding the paper still in his hand, Captain M—— walked slowly and thoughtfully on, passed through a break in the high wall of rocks, and gazed down into the basin of the mountain. The magnificence of the scene was gradually drawing his mind away from other thoughts, when his servant touched his arm, and said, in a low voice, “We had better be a little upon our guard, sir, for there are more people about us than we know of, and I have heard that our friends who take to the bush are worse devils than the people of the country; and they are

bad enough. Look down there, and you will see the axe has been at work—ay, and there's a man lying under that tree. He looks mighty like as if he were dead."

"I see—I see," answered Captain M——. "You stay here with Johnstone, while I go on. Put a ball in each of your guns, however, in case of the worst; though I don't think, if we do not injure them, they will try to do any harm to well-armed men."

"I wouldn't trust them," replied the servant; "but we'll keep a look-out, sir, and I think I could put a ball in an apple at that distance."

Captain M—— advanced quietly, not wishing to wake the man if he were sleeping, till he was close to him; and so profound was his slumber, that the young officer gazed on him nearly for a minute without his having heard the approach of any one. At length Captain M—— stooped down, and shook him gently by the arm. The other instantly started up, and laid his hand upon the axe by his side; but the officer at once addressed him in a kindly tone, saying, "Do not be alarmed; it is a friend."

“A friend,” answered the stranger, rising to his full height, with the axe in his hand, and gazing at him from head to foot; “that is a word easily said; but here it cannot be a true one. I have no friends, sir.”

“In that, perhaps, you may be mistaken,” answered Captain M——. “As for myself, I trust I am a friend to the whole human race; but what I meant to say was, that I am not an enemy.”

“That one understands,” answered the other; “though it is somewhat difficult, too, in a land where nature seems to have planted fraud and enmity amongst the human race, and to which other countries send the offscourings of their population to propagate new crimes, and even degrade the barbarous wickedness they found.”

The words and the appearance of his strange companion struck the young officer very much. His tone was high and proud, his look grave and thoughtful; and though there was a certain degree of bitterness in what he said, yet there was that gentlemanly dignity in the whole which could not be mistaken.

“It is strange to meet you, sir, in this place,” said Captain M——, after a moment’s thought. “I had imagined, till a moment ago, that I was the first European who had ever climbed this hill.”

“You are the second, I believe,” answered the stranger. “I was the first—at least, I can find no trace of any one of that adventurous race, who, in pursuit of wealth, dominion, science, pleasure, or health, penetrate into almost every part of the known world, having been here before me.”

“Then you are alone?” said his visitor.

“Quite,” replied the other. “You have men with you, I see,” and he turned his eyes towards the servant and his companion, who were standing at a little distance. “Whatever be your object—whether you come to take me, or are merely here from the curiosity which sets half our countrymen running over the world—you have but one man, and that a wearied and exhausted one, to deal with.”

“Set your mind at rest,” replied Captain M——, who saw that there was some lingering

suspicion still in the stranger's bosom. "I have no commission, and certainly no wish, to disturb you in any way; neither did I come to these countries altogether from mere curiosity. A desire to benefit my fellow-creatures, and a strong interest in the fate of men whose crimes have shut them out from the general pale of society, but not, I trust, from the compassion of their brethren, or from the mercy of their God, first led me to a neighbouring island; and I am extending my wanderings through this uncultivated but beautiful country, with a hope of turning to account for others what I have myself observed. Perhaps you can give me some information; and I promise you, as a man of honour and a gentleman, never to say a word to any one which can do you the least detriment. I see you must be a man of superior education, and, I should imagine, of superior rank to those who are usually met with in this country; and I am sure, after the candid expression of my views, and the pledge I have given, you will not scruple to say anything that can further my objects."

“I have nothing to say,” answered the other, seating himself where he had before been lying. “I know little, have seen little ; but all I have seen has been iniquity, and villany, and vice, and folly, and ignorance, in high and low, master and servant, convict and tyrant. I am inclined to cry with the Psalmist, ‘There is none that doeth good—no, not one.’”

Captain M—— smiled somewhat sadly. “I am afraid you are quite right,” he answered ; “and it has long been my conviction, that the system of what is called convict discipline in these colonies, not only does not tend in the slightest degree to reform an offender, but tends to degrade his moral character to the lowest possible point. It is my belief, even, that the system followed at a very rude period of our history, and when the person sentenced to transportation was actually sold as a slave to the planters of America—though corrupt and abominable in a high degree—was really less detrimental to the unhappy convict than that upon which we now act. I have always held that we have no right to condemn a man’s soul

as well as his body ; and I feel that we are here instrumental in plunging those whom we expel from our own country into vice and crimes more horrible than they ever contemplated when they committed the act which brought them hither."

The stranger smiled brightly. "You seem to me," he said, "to be the first really benevolent and reasonable man who has visited a place of abominations. But even you, perhaps, have not considered all. What little I can tell you, I will tell. Call down your men from above, and seat yourself here by me, and in the face of nature, and of the God who willed it to be 'very good,' I will tell you truly, without even a shade of deceit, all that my own short experience has shown."

"I cannot do so now," replied Captain M——, "for I have got more companions below, and must go down to them before it is dark, otherwise they would probably come to seek me. But cannot you go down with us? You shall be kindly treated, I promise, and free to return whenever you please."

The stranger shook his head. "No," he said, "I will never seek man again. I will lie in my own lair, like the beast of the field. Here I have beauty and excellence around me uncontaminated; but wherever man's foottreads, there is violence, and evil, and corruption."

"Well," replied the young officer, "I will not press you, if you do not like it; but if you will permit me, I will come up again to-morrow, and we will talk of all these subjects fully, before I go back to Tasmania. There is a surveying vessel off the coast, which will wait for me till I come down; but in the meantime I would fain know what you meant when you said, in speaking of the abominations and evils of the convict system, that I had not considered all. It is probable, indeed, that I have not, although I have given great attention to the subject; but I wish to know what it was to which you particularly alluded."

The stranger laid his hand on Captain M——'s arm, and said, "In the fallibility of human judgment, in the difficulties of proof, and in the imperfection of law, it must often

happen, and does often happen, that a man perfectly innocent is condemned with the guilty. Were it only that he had to suffer in person from the sad mistake, the event might be lamented, perhaps excused. But what have those lawgivers and those statesmen to reproach themselves with, who have framed a system which, in all cases of such error, must be fatal to the eternal happiness of the man unjustly condemned, which plunges him into an atmosphere pestilential to every good feeling of the heart, to every high principle, to every religious thought! Do they not know that vice is contagious? Have they not inoculated hundreds with the moral plague? Have they not even denied the sick the help of spiritual physicians in the pest-house to which they have confined them? I tell you, sir, it is from this that I have fled. Innocent of even the slightest offence towards my fellow-men, though doubtless culpable in much towards my God, I could have borne the labour, and the slavery, and the disgrace, if not without murmuring, yet with patience. But when I found that I was to re-

main, bound hand and foot, amidst beings corrupted beyond all cure, and daily to accustom my eyes and my mind to scenes and thoughts which could leave no high or holy feeling unblasted in my heart, I said, ‘Man has no right to do this;’ and I broke my chain.”

Captain M—— seemed much moved, and he wrung the stranger’s hand hard. “I am sorry for you, sir,” he said,—“I am sorry for you. I will come up to-morrow, and we will talk more. In the meantime, tell me what I must call you to myself—I know that many persons in your situation take an assumed name. It is that which I mean.”

“I have taken none,” answered the stranger, with a sad smile; and then, pointing to the fish lying on the grass, he added, “You must think of me, if we never meet again, as the Nameless Fisherman of the nameless lake.”

“Nay, we shall meet to-morrow, if you are still here,” answered Captain M——.

“I shall be here, if I am alive,” replied the stranger, “to-morrow, and the next day, and for the years and months to come, till death

relieves me. But perhaps even before to-morrow there may be an end of all. I have felt ill; the body has given way beneath the mind; the strong rider has well-nigh killed the weak horse; and this morning I felt as if I were incapable of any exertion. I did make it, however, and methinks I am better for my labours.—But now, adieu! The sun has reached a point whence his descent will be rapid, and darkness will overtake you if you have far to go.”

“Farewell!” answered Captain M——. “I scarcely like to go and leave you here alone, or to think of what you will have to endure in this solitude, if you persist in remaining here. How you are to procure food, or shelter, or clothing, I do not perceive.”

“The skins of beasts,” replied the stranger, “will give me clothing good enough for my state: the fish of the lake must give me food. Bread, indeed, I may never taste again, but there are fruits and roots which may supply its place. Then, as to shelter, the clefts of the rock, the caverns by which it is pierced, will afford all

that I need; and as for means and appliances to make these things available, nature must furnish and teach me. Surely I shall not be more helpless than one of the savages of this land. They live, and I shall live—longer, at least, than is desirable to myself. Farewell, farewell!" And once more bidding him adieu, for the time, Captain M—— left him, and returned to his people.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE emotions with which Dudley saw the strangers depart were very strong. It seemed like the last glimpse of civilized life to be afforded him. It brought back the memory of happier hours. The pleasant thoughts of early days returned ; and as he did not wish that any one should see the strong movements of his heart, he paused for several minutes, till he thought the visitor and his party must have descended the hill to some distance ; and then, walking slowly to the top and through the break in the cliffs, he followed the track which they had pursued with his eye, till it lighted on them, and then watched them till they were lost

amongst the trees which surrounded the spot where they had fixed their little encampment. Then turning back to the sort of dwelling-place he had chosen, he spread the turf within the enclosures thickly with the leaves which he stripped from the branches. Kneeling down upon the ground, just without the palisade, he prayed for about five minutes ; and then rising, watched the sky while it ranged through almost every colour of the rainbow, till at length it became grey, and knowing that five minutes more would bring darkness, he placed his knapsack as a pillow on the leaves, and once more laid himself down to sleep. Slumber was not so easily obtained, however, as it had been on the night before : he felt better in body, indeed, but more depressed in mind. The visit of the stranger had disturbed rather than calmed him ; it had roused up regrets which he had laboured to banish ; it had shown him, more forcibly than ever, the value of all which he had for ever lost, and he lay and meditated painfully for more than one hour.

At length, however, he slept ; and, although it

lasted not for long, his slumber was refreshing. Shortly after daybreak he was on foot again, and felt lighter and easier than on the preceding day. Prayer was his first occupation, and then going down to the banks of the lake, he undressed and plunged in, swimming boldly, as he had been accustomed to do while a student in a civilized land. The walk up the hill warmed him again, though he had found the water very cold ; but there was invigorating refreshment in the cool wave ; and the rejoicing sensation of returning strength diminished to the eye of imagination the dangers of the present, the evils of the past, and the dreariness of the future. When he reached his hut, he lighted the fire as before, put one of the fish he had caught to broil on the ashes, and then sat down to consider what was to be done next. Tools he wanted of many kinds, and weapons for the chase ; and he saw that notwithstanding all the advantages of education, the savage, accustomed to depend upon himself alone, had great advantages over the European, habituated to tax the industry of a thousand hands for the production of every

article he used. He had learned something, indeed, of the natural resources of the country, of that which it produced spontaneously for the support of life, and he doubted not that, till the winter came on, he should be able to supply himself with all that was needful. The intervening time he proposed to devote for preparations against that period, when, although game might be more easily found, the tree and the shrub would refuse all contributions. He would fashion for himself a bow, he thought, tall and strong, such as he had drawn in early days; he would prepare snares, ay, and nets, perhaps, from the fibrous bark of the trees. The spoils of the chase should furnish him with clothing, and he would lie in wait for the creatures of the wood, like the hunters in the days of old.

He smiled as he thus thought, but there was bitterness in it, too, and rising up, he set to work to complete that which the previous evening had left undone.

He had hardly commenced, however, when the sound of voices calling reached him, and looking out from his hut, he saw his visitor of the night before, with three men, each laden

with his several burden. Dudley suspended his labour, but did not advance to meet them. The society of one he could bear, but the presence of many was a load to him.

“There, lay the things down under the tree,” said Captain M——, when they were within about a hundred yards, “and then go and do as I told you, taking care, if you find any of the specimens I mentioned, not to break the crystals. You can return about two. Till then leave me here, without interruption, except in case of emergency.”

The men deposited their burdens on the ground, and the young officer, coming frankly forward to his new acquaintance, shook hands with him, saying, “This wild life has a strange charm. I think I could go on roving through these scenes as long as life and health lasted.”

“Do you see that sun,” asked Dudley, “soaring up from the dark horizon, like an eagle from its eyry? * Do not, however, suppose it is that which gives the light and beauty

* This word is usually wrongly written *ærie*, as if derived from *aer* or *air*, but I am convinced it comes from the German word *ey*, an egg.

you find in these scenes. The sun is in man's heart. You have no dark shadow in you, either innate nor accidental. You have no foul thoughts to mourn, as some in these lands have. You have no black cloud hanging over fame, and blighting life, like myself. You have no disappointed hopes, and fruitless yearnings for friendships and affections lost for ever, to spread the golden pathway of the sky with a dull, gray pall. Well may all seem bright to you—you have no despair."

"Man should never despair so long as there is a pure spot in his heart," replied Captain M——; "and the innocent wrongly condemned should despair least of all, knowing that there is One who sees where man sees not, and who, though in wisdom he may chastise, yet in his own good time will comfort and raise up."

"It is that faith alone which gives me strength to live," replied Dudley; "but yet my fate is sad—so sad as to darken all around. Were it not for that chance of change below, which hope ever holds out to the man not utterly lost, and for that certainty of change

in another world which faith affords to the believer, life here, to a man wronged and blasted as I have been, would be a boon not worth the keeping. What have I to look forward to?—a life of toilful solitude, struggling each day for bare subsistence, without companionship or sympathy, without speech, without object, without reward, and with the high privilege of thought unfruitful except of bitterness and ashes. When the time of age and sickness comes, too, what will be my fate then?—But I will not think of it. I shall be an idiot before that, or worse, a savage.”

“Nay, I trust not,” answered Captain M——. “If you are innocent, as you say, sooner or later that innocence will appear, and——”

“Impossible!” replied Dudley. “I had a fair and impartial trial—there was a skilful and well-conducted defence—the jury were men of probity and sense—the judge mild and equitable. All was done that could be done, and hope on that side would be worse than vain.”

“Then you must learn to endure your lot,”

said Captain M——, gravely, “and to make it as tolerable as possible by your own exertions. I can do little to help you or to render it easier, but that little I will do. I have brought you up a few things that may be a comfort to you for a time, and some others which will be of more permanent service. I can well spare them, for I shall embark to-night, and can procure more. Come and see the little store, which, though mere trifles, may be of much use to you—at least, till you have become accustomed by degrees to the fate which has fallen upon you.”

Dudley followed him with a full heart, and sitting down by the bundles which the men had brought up, Captain M—— exposed to his companion’s eyes what was, indeed, a treasure to one placed in such strange and fearful circumstances. There were blankets against the wintry cold, and a rough wrapping coat, some packets of common medicines, in a small white wood box, a hammer, a small saw, and one or two other tools, together with a good knife, and a measure. There was a case bottle, oo, and a drinking-cup, and some linen.

“ This other packet,” said Captain M——, “ contains some books—one on the botany of this colony, which may be very serviceable to you—a single volume of Essays—some sermons written for the convicts—the Vicar of Wakefield, and a Bible.”

“ They will indeed be treasures,” said Dudley, with a glad look. “ A Bible I already possess. That has been left to me, though I have lost all else ; and most grateful do I feel for so much kindness, sir—kindness where I have no right or title to expect it.”

“ Every man has a right to expect it of his fellow men,” answered Captain M——; “ and I should be worse than a brute if I could refuse it to one circumstanced as you are, when I will not pretend to doubt your innocence.”

“ That is strange,” said Dudley, thoughtfully ; “ that you should not doubt it, knowing nothing of me, while others who knew much did doubt.”

“ And yet,” answered his companion, “ I am not without a reason. I have accustomed myself much to observe men, and the way in

which they act, under particular circumstances, and I never yet saw one who owned he had had a fair and impartial trial in every particular, and yet declared himself innocent, unless he was innocent. There has been always a something which he thought unfair—a cause why he had been cast, as it is termed; either the judge was wrong, or the jury was wrong, or the witnesses were perjured, or the counsel for the prosecution had acted unfairly, or something or another had given an unfavourable turn to the trial. However, I will beg of you to accept of these little articles, and moreover, this small writing-case, with which I have travelled. I know not whether it will be useful to you at present, being entirely unaware of the circumstances of your case; but at a future period it may be most serviceable; and even now, if you feel inclined to write a few lines to any friend in England, I will carry your letter safe to the next post, and take care that it shall be forwarded to its destination.”

“What can I say?” asked Dudley, putting his hand to his brow, and speaking as it were

to himself. "Nevertheless, I will write, if it be but a few words, to tell them that I still live ;" and thanking Captain M—— again and again, especially for his last gift, Dudley seated himself, and wrote as follows :—

"DEAR EDGAR,

"Though deprived of the power of seeing you before I went, I heard something of your kindness, and my heart will ever be grateful. I know you have never doubted my innocence, nor has Eda. Tell her, for me, that I am innocent, and that my innocence and my faith are my only support. I have quitted the colony to which I was sent—broken, in short, the bonds which they placed upon me, and I am now living in perfect, utter solitude. Tell her, I love her still—shall always love her. Yet, let her forget me ; for what but pain can follow remembrance of one so lost to hope and all that brightens earth as

"EDWARD DUDLEY."

He folded the letter, and addressed it, and then gazed at it for a moment with a some-

what puzzled expression of countenance. "How shall I seal it?" he said at length.

"You will find wax and a light-box in the top of the case," answered Captain M——, with a smile. "That which I provided for a long journey amongst civilized men as well as wild nature may serve you for many months in this solitude."

"For many years," said Dudley, sadly; "but yet it will be a treasure and a consolation to me. Even the capability of noting down the passing of the days is something, and I thank you from the very bottom of my heart."

The letter was accordingly sealed and delivered to the charge of Captain M——, who looked at the address with interest, thinking, as he did so, "I must inquire into this case, for it seems a very strange one."

In the meantime, Dudley was gazing at the light-box with a thoughtful air. "This will be most serviceable too," he said at length, "for I can foresee that in the winter I shall have much difficulty in procuring fire. There are no flints here; and although I know that the

savages can obtain a light by rubbing pieces of dry wood together, yet I have seen none that is fit for the purpose. I have had great difficulty already in lighting a fire, and the scorched branches which afforded me the means of doing so will soon be exhausted. I must wrap this little box carefully up, so as to keep it from all damp, and doubtless the matches will last me through the winter."

"I am sorry there are no more of them," answered Captain M——; "but at all events they will give you time to learn other contrivances. I know not well, indeed, how you procure food, for I suppose you do not live altogether on the produce of the lake."

"I do not propose to do so," said Dudley, "for in some seasons I believe it would afford me no supply; but I must have recourse to the old primeval means—the bow and arrows, and the snare," he added, with a sad smile.

Captain M—— looked for a moment or two at the fine double-barrelled gun which lay beside him, before he answered; but then, raising his eyes with a frank, kind expression, he said,

“Perhaps I am doing wrong, but I cannot make up my mind to leave you altogether dependent upon such very precarious means of support. I have said I believe you innocent; let me add, I feel sure you are a man of honour also, and if you will promise me never to use what I am going to give against human life, except in your own defence, and especially not against any one sent to take you, in case such a thing should ever occur, I will leave you this gun, and supply you with ammunition; you will then be in a condition always to procure food at least.”

The promise he required was readily made; and Dudley said little more, for the feeling of gratitude he experienced was overpowering. He sat with his head leaning on his hand, buried in meditation; and who can trace the wild range of his thoughts during the few minutes which he thus remained silent. His companion saw that his kindness had plunged him into that sort of gloom which is often produced by feelings the most noble and the most tender, when they stand strongly

contrasted with some dark and irremediable point in the fate of those who experience them; and in order rather to rouse him from his reverie, than anything else, he said, "I suppose you are well accustomed to the use of a gun?"

"I will show you," answered Dudley, who was certainly one of the most skilful marksmen of his day. "Let us walk down the hill; we shall doubtless find some game; and if you will permit me, I will prove that you do not place your gun in inexperienced hands."

"Willingly," replied Captain M——, rising from the ground where he had been seated. "I am sorry I have not more powder and shot with me; but I will leave upon the spot where our little party is encamped all that we have, except a few charges, which may be necessary as we go down towards the sea-shore. If you are provident, it will serve you for some time; and ere long, depend upon it, a population will grow up around you from whom you will be able to obtain fresh supplies. This country must be destined to be much more thickly populated very soon. The human race is ad-

vancing in every direction, and the progress already made is marvellous."

"That is the most frightful consideration of all the many which present themselves to the mind in contemplating the present state of the neighbouring colony," replied Dudley. "When one thinks of its rapid progress, and of the multitudes springing up here like a crop of grain, and remembers that almost every seed is diseased, that the moral condition of almost every human being is either tainted at his arrival, or destined soon to be tainted by the contaminating influences to which he is exposed, what can we look forward to in the future but a perfect hell upon earth? Can we expect that, without efficient guidance, with few means of religious instruction, with no moral restraints and no correcting principle but the fear of corporeal punishment, destitute of even habitual reverence for probity, crowded together in places where virtue, and honour, and honesty, are a scoff and a reproach, where the highest distinction is excess in vice or skill in crime—can we expect that any man who may become a father

will breed his child up in the way that he should go, and will not rather infect him with his own vices, to be fostered and matured by others, equally, if not more, conversant with crime? It is a known fact, sir, that in the neighbouring colony of Van Dieman's Land, the free emigrant of the lower class is looked upon with more doubt, and suspicion, even than the convict, and is, nine times out of ten, as base and degraded. What must a colony become thus constituted? and what is the awful responsibility upon a nation which, possessing a large—I might say, an immense—extent of fertile and beautiful country, plants in it, as the germ of future nations, all that is wretched, abominable, and depraved of the mother country—denies the wretched men that it sends out the means of amelioration, and by every law and ordinance insures that the pestilence shall be propagated from man to man, till none but those who are placed above temptation by superior fortune or superior culture remains unaffected by moral disease more frightful than any plague which ever ravaged the world?"

“But how can this be amended?” asked Captain M——. “What are the means?”

“They require deep consideration,” replied Dudley. “It is the actual state of things which first strikes us; the remedies may be long in seeking. This is more especially the case when a particular system has long been going on, and every attempt at partial reform has but added evil to evil, till at length the whole has become intolerable. The natural process is easily described; and it is only by historically viewing the question that we can see how such monstrous abominations have arisen. These things are not done as a whole: it is step by step that they are performed. If man sat down calmly to consider what was best to be done under particular circumstances, if he meditated philosophically upon the object which he proposed to attain, and endeavoured to foresee, as far as the shortness of the human view will permit, the results of all that he attempts for temporary purposes, he might frame, and would frame, if not a perfect system, at least one, the defects in which would be

comparatively few, and easily remedied ; but what has been usually his course ? He has considered the temporary purpose alone, and that not philosophically. In the first institution of transportation, his object seemed to be twofold—to punish guilty persons, and to deliver their country from their presence. Simple exile was the simplest form in which this could be achieved ; the next was the selling of the convict for a slave ; then came the transportation to a colony of the mother country, with a prohibition against return—otherwise, the peopling of a colony with the vicious and the criminal ; then punishment in the colony was added to mere transportation ; and in all and every one of these steps, nothing was held in view but infliction on the culprit—relief to his native land. Reformation was never thought of, degradation was never guarded against ; the moral condition of the convict, or his religious improvement, was never taken into consideration ; nor did the mind of man seem to reach, till within the last few years, the comprehension of that essential point in the whole

question—that where the convict was going he was to become the member of a vast community, the state and condition of which would for years be strictly connected with that of the country which expelled him. None of these things were ever thought of, and still less the high and imperative duty which binds legislators to attempt, in punishing, to reclaim—a duty not only to their country and to their fellow men, but to their God.”

Captain M—— seemed to ponder over his companion’s words for a few moments, and then replied, “I doubt not that what you say is true. The evils you speak of have arisen, in a great part, from the want of a due comprehension and consideration of the objects to be obtained; but were that all, the evils of the system existing would be speedily remedied; but I fear there is another great error which statesmen have fallen into, and which will ever, as long as it is persisted in, throw insuperable obstacles in the way of reform. The error I allude to, is a belief that corporeal punishment will reclaim. I am convinced that

its only tendency is to degrade and render more vicious the person on whom it is inflicted. That it must exist I do not deny, for the probability of incurring it must be held up before the convict's view, to deter him from adding fresh crimes to those which have gone before; but the principal means I would employ would be entirely moral means, encouragement to a right course, exhortation, instruction, and the chance of recovering gradually that sense of moral dignity, the want of which is a source of all evil."

"A theory which may be pushed too far," said Dudley, "though excellent in itself. Punishment is undoubtedly needful, both as a restraint and an act of justice, but believe me also, that coercion as a means is likewise required. I am convinced that in all these matters we try to generalize too much. If we consider the infinite variety of human characters, we shall see that an infinite variety of means is required in the direction of any large body of human beings. To expect that any man, or any body of men, should be able to

scrutinize the character of each individual convict, so as to apply the precise method of treatment to his particular case, would be to require far too much; but the rules and regulations adopted by a government, and carried out by its officers in the colony, should be such as to render the application of particular means as easy as possible. Entrusted to well-instructed and observing men, a general knowledge of the character of each convict could be easily obtained from his conduct on his passage, and of the crime for which he received sentence. The reports thus obtained might form the basis for correct classification on the arrival of each ship; and the distribution of the unfortunate men sent out might be afterwards made in accordance with this classification. Thus you would save those comparatively pure from contamination, and you would reduce the number of those requiring strict supervision and coercion to the utmost possible extent. You would acquire, in fact, the power of at once applying the means to the end; you would know where moral means would be most efficacious, where

restraint was most needful, and have some guidance for shaping your conduct according to the necessities of the case. I am aware, indeed, that some classification is made, but of the most imperfect character, and this I look upon as one of the causes of the total failure of the system of transportation. I believe, also, the machinery, both for improving the moral conduct of the convict and for preventing crime after his arrival in the colony, has been most inadequate from the very beginning. I look upon it that one of the greatest possible objects is, by constant and active supervision, to prevent the possibility of a vicious course being pursued for some time after the convict's arrival in the colony. Believe me, that to dishabituate his mind from the commission of evil, is the first step to habituate it to the pursuit of good. But what has been the case? When first convicts were sent to this colony,—the period is not very remote,—it never seemed to enter into the contemplation of those who sent them, to afford them any religious instruction, and it was entirely owing to the exertions of a private indi-

vidual, that the means of spiritual improvement were provided them at all; and now, when the influx of these unhappy men into Van Dieman's Land is from five thousand to nine thousand per annum, if we look either to the opportunities afforded them of obtaining religious training, or to the power granted to the local government of ensuring constant supervision, even in the cases of the most hardened and irreclaimable, we shall find that it is utterly inadequate to the numbers who require it. What can be the result? What right have we to expect anything but that which we see? With a system founded originally in an incomplete view of the case, with an incomplete classification of the persons on whom it is to operate, and with the most inefficient means of carrying out the objects which should be ever held in view, the failure is inevitable; and thus has a place set apart for the reception of criminals, whom it was a duty not only to punish but to reform, become a mere nest of unreclaimed felons, and a school for every species of vice and wickedness which can degrade the human race, and

bring eternal destruction upon the soul of man. The way in which these colonies have been conducted, I do not scruple to say, is a great national sin, which cannot be without its punishment."

The conversation proceeded in the same strain for some time farther, during which they made their way slowly downward towards the banks of the lake, now pursuing a green path amongst large masses of rock and stone, now descending natural steps as it were in the coral rock, now pausing to gaze with interest into one of the deep caves which pierced the side of the precipice, and in which the light assumed a shadowy red from the hue of the internal walls. To two warm-hearted and enthusiastic men, a conversation so deeply affecting the best interests of their fellow-creatures was, as may well be supposed, highly interesting, and there was something in the grandeur, the wildness, and the solitude of the scene, which seemed to elevate and expand the thoughts as they reasoned of the destinies of the multitudes fated to be the fathers of a population about

ere long to overspread the wide uncultivated tracts around them. The morning was balmy and refreshing, the sun had not yet risen high enough to render his heat burdensome ; and as their course lay along the eastern side of that wide basin, the cool shadows of the rocks, and hills, and trees, spread out long and blue over the rugged precipices and the verdant turf at their feet. For a time they forgot the object of their walk, but at length, Dudley pointed to a spot in the sky, saying, "There is a vulture, and if you will permit me, I will try my skill in bringing him down. He will soon come near ; for I have remarked, in travelling hither, that in this country the birds of prey, whenever they see a moving object, approach it rapidly. The butchers of the air have not yet learned that there are butchers of the earth more powerful than themselves."

"You had better draw out the balls and put in some slugs," said Captain M——, handing him the gun ; "though I suspect he will not come within range."

"I will try the ball upon him," said Dudley ;

“ I used not often to miss my mark, but it is two long years since I had gun or rifle in my hand ;” and gazing down upon the highly-finished fowling-piece, he thought of the morning when he had gone out to shoot with Edgar Adelon, and all the dark and terrible events which had followed. Suddenly rousing himself, after a few moments, he looked up towards the sky again, and saw that the bird had approached much nearer, skimming along just over the summit of the crags which towered above them, and, with curved neck and bent head, eyeing them as he sailed along. Dudley put the gun to his shoulder, and though Captain M—— remarked, “ He is much too far,” pulled the trigger, after a momentary pause. The report was hardly heard before the broad wings fluttered with convulsive beating, collapsed, and whirling round and round in the air, the tyrant of the mountain came thundering down at the distance of some thirty yards from them. When they reached the spot where he lay, they found him quite dead, though the yellow eyes still rolled in the bare skinny head. The ball had passed

right through him ; but it seemed that he had recently been inflicting the fate upon some other creature which he had just received himself, for his strong horny bill and talons were red with blood, which, from its fresh appearance, could not have been shed very long.

“This would seem a species of condor,” said Captain M——, after examining it carefully. “What an immense extent of wing ! I must carry it away with me as a very fine specimen.”

“I thought the condor was confined to South America,” said Dudley ; “but I am very ignorant of such subjects, and certainly here shall not have any temptation to form a museum of natural history. I must save whatever powder and shot you can afford me, for the sole purpose of obtaining food, and refrain from spending it upon my fellow-animals of prey.”

“It is a condor, I think,” answered his companion ; “and I believe that species is spread more generally over both the old and new world than is supposed. They are very rare, however, everywhere.”

“ I have seen many strongly resembling this creature hovering about these cliffs and the top of the neighbouring hill,” answered Dudley ; “ but, of course, I never could approach one till now, for they did not think fit to attack me, and I had no means of bringing them down. We will carry it back with us ; but first, I must provide you with some dinner, and the lake is my only resource. Some of the feathers of this good gentleman will make an artificial fly, not at all unlike those I saw yesterday on the shore ;” and sitting down by the dead vulture, he speedily constructed an insect which had sufficient resemblance to those they were accustomed to devour, to deceive the voracious inhabitants of the waters.

Five or six large fish, not exactly trout, but somewhat resembling that species, repaid an hour’s angling ; and then walking back, the two wanderers, each with his own particular burden, made their way to the spot where Dudley’s fire had been lighted the day before. Their meal was frugal enough ; bread they had none ; their drink was supplied by

a little stream issuing from the rocks ; but yet it seemed pleasant to both, and Captain M—— said, with a smile, when he saw his companion somewhat puzzled as to how he should distribute the food, “I can see you are not accustomed to this roving life. The memory of old habits clings to you still ; but as far as my experience shows me, it is wonderfully less tenacious with uncultivated than with cultivated minds. A few months is quite sufficient to qualify any convict for a bushranger.”

“It would take years so to qualify me,” replied Dudley. “I affect no particular degree of refinement, but I do think the delicacies of life form one of the greatest charms of society. They are, in fact, based upon higher principles than at first appear. I believe that they are all founded upon the maxim, ‘neither to be, nor to seem, nor to do anything which can be unnecessarily offensive to others.’ This implies no sacrifice of principle, and no unreasonable subserviency of manner ; for the moment a man tries to bend what is right to what is courteous, that instant courtesy becomes a vice ; but

I never yet heard a reasonable opinion which could not be so expressed as to offend no reasonable man; and with regard to the minor and to the conventional courtesies, to omit them where no wrong is implied, would be a violation of that which is due to our fellow-men and to ourselves. Nevertheless, you must not expect towels and water-basins in the desert to wash after you have eaten with your fingers, any more than you must expect bread where there are no ovens, or wine where no grapes grow."

"I am perfectly satisfied," answered Captain M——, in a gay tone; "I shall find my finger-glass at the little stream there, and my napkin on the green grass; but still, my good friend, there are several little things which may be serviceable to you in my small encampment down below. I shall have no need of them, going back so soon; and I do heartily believe there are no less than four or five round-pointed table-knives, and at least three two-pronged forks. Some towels, too, may not come amiss; and if ever you should have another dinner-party here, they may serve as napkins as well. I will

leave them on the spot when we go away, and you can take possession of them at your leisure. I could procure you, too, a box of nails from the ship; but I do not know how to convey them to you without discovering your retreat to those on board; and, doubtless, you would not like to come into too near proximity with the people of the vessel, especially as they have orders to search for and seize an escaped convict of the name of Brady, a most desperate fellow, who has hitherto frustrated every attempt to take him. He has somehow made his way over hither from Van Dieman's Land—at least, it is supposed so."

"He has not come to this district, as far as I have seen," answered Dudley; "but still it would be better to avoid all recognition. Nevertheless, I will admit, this box of nails you speak of would be of greater value to me than a box of pure gold, and if you will put it on shore at a spot where these two hills are in a direct line with each other, I will seek it and bring it away. I might say, I will hereafter find some way to show my gratitude; but now I have none, nor any hope

of so doing. I can therefore but thank you again and again, and say—would there was a chance of my being able to do that for you and yours which my heart prompts, but which my means forbid.”

“Not for ever, not for ever,” answered Captain M——. “I feel very sure that if you but persevere in abstaining from evil, a time will come when errors will be removed and truth made manifest.”

“Beyond the grave,” answered Dudley ; and then suddenly changing the conversation, he carried it on in a somewhat lighter tone, till Captain M—— rose to leave him. They parted like two old friends who might never meet again, and while one carried away a feeling of deep intense interest and curiosity, the other remained with a sensation of desolation more profound and painful than ever.

CHAPTER XV.

WEARILY passed the days ; for though active exertion is undoubtedly the best of all mere earthly balms to the hurt mind,—and Dudley had plenty of it,—yet there are moments when, in perfect solitude, thought will return, and tear open wounds afresh. He strove against it, indeed, as much as man could strive. He laboured incessantly, more for the purpose of occupying his mind with anything but his own dark fate, than to render his abode more comfortable ; and when in the watches of the night he awoke, and thought would return, he tried hard to turn it into any other channel than that

of memory. Still, in spite of himself, the bitter theme would often recur; in vain he tried to meditate upon mere abstract questions of art, of science, of philosophy; in vain, to fix the mind down to the present and its necessities, all gloomy as that present was; still departed happiness, and bright hopes blasted, would rise up like spectres, and scare peace and tranquillity away.

Sometimes he would try to create a feeling of alarm in his own breast at the prospect of the coming winter, when in that lonely scene he should be left in the midst of snows and tempests, with none of the resources of the fruit-tree or the lake; when the wind and the storm would rave round his frail dwelling, and the long night would have no solace, no occupation, but that of listening to the howling of the blast; and he would devote his thoughts and his exertions to provide against the coming of the sad season. He went down to the spot where the tent of Captain M—— had been pitched, and there found fresh proofs of his kindness; for he had left everything that he

could possibly spare behind him, together with a few words written on a scrap of paper, giving his address, and assuring his lonely friend that if at any time he could serve him he would do so with pleasure. Then, with fresh means and more serviceable tools than the mere hatchet with which he had first commenced the work, poor Dudley laboured hard to render his dwelling proof against storm or enemy; but the want of nails soon presented itself, and he set out for the sea-shore, thinking, "His kindness would not forget."

Nor had it; for after a walk of twenty miles, he found not only the box which had been promised, but two other presents of equal value—a large bag of fresh biscuits, and a ship's hand-lamp surrounded by thick glass.

Sometimes, as on this occasion, the expedients to which he was forced to have recourse called up a melancholy smile. "Where shall I find oil," he thought, "or any means of nourishing the flame; and yet there must be oleaginous shrubs or trees in the neighbourhood, amongst all the many children of these vast

forests. I must learn many a trade before I have done, and must try and construct myself an oil-mill. If all fails, I must come down, as the winter approaches, and see if I can surprise a seal upon the shore."

As he thus thought, he seated himself and ate one of the biscuits with a relish for the plain wheaten food which he had never known before. For the last eight or nine days he had tasted nothing but fish or flesh; and he now found that bread is indeed the staff of life; for he arose lighter and yet more refreshed from his simple meal by the sea-shore than he had felt since he commenced his wandering course. He then adjusted the burdens he had to carry, so as to render their pressure as equal as possible, during his long walk back; and I may remark, indeed, that his mathematical studies proved more serviceable to him in existing circumstances than he had ever thought possible. He had always regarded them as fine abstractions, the principal use of which to a man of the station in which he was born, was to produce a habit of correct reasoning; but

now, when he came to apply them practically, he felt how invaluable they are in every walk of life.

With his gun under his arm, and laden with a weight of eighty or ninety pounds, he walked slowly on his way, still keeping the summit of the mountain in view. At first his course lay across an arid tract of country, near the sea-shore, producing no vegetation but some thin tall stalks of grass, and thickly strewn with small, flat, circular fragments of stone, exactly resembling the biscuits he was carrying. As the ground rose a little, however, a more prolific soil was obtained, and he entered what is called the scrub, where tall trees, and bushes, and a thousand fruit and flower-bearing shrubs, surrounded him on every side, and often cut off the view of Mount Gambier. Long brakes or paths were still to be found through the thicket, however, and every now and then, for a mile or two, the vegetation was thinner, so that, guiding his course by the sun, and calculating, as exactly as he could, the distance which both he and the great orb of day had

travelled, he followed a direct line as far as the nature of the ground would permit, and from time to time caught sight of the lofty rocks above the crater, over the leafy wilderness around him. Here and there, however, came a patch of bright green meadow, and at the edge of one of these, before he entered the forest again, he sat down to rest himself, and cast the burdens from his shoulders, for the fatigues he had lately undergone were very great, and he felt the unusual weight he carried. He was dreadfully thirsty too, for he had not found a drop of fresh water on the journey, and the heat was intense.

In about half an hour, the decline of the sun, and the gradual lengthening of the shadows, somewhat cooled the air, and a fresh breeze sprang up from seaward, agitating the tops of the tall trees. Dudley rose to proceed upon his way, for he had still a walk of more than two hours before him ; and, with his gun under his arm, he was stooping down to lift the bag of biscuit, when he suddenly heard a step. It was that of a man, and

was consequently the more ungrateful to his ear than if it had been that of a beast, however wild and fierce. His gun was instantly in his hand, with both barrels cocked; and the next moment, coming at a quick pace out of one of the glades in the neighbouring wood, appeared a figure not calculated to dissipate any apprehensions. It was that of a man, tall and powerfully built, and of a most unprepossessing countenance. He was evidently a European, but yet the colour which his skin had acquired by long exposure was almost as dark as that of one of the natives of the land. His black hair, of more than six months' growth, fell wild over his shoulders and brows, and his beard also had been suffered to remain unshorn till it nearly reached his bosom. In this mass of hair, which covered his face, the features, which were sharp and aquiline, seemed planted as if looking through a mask; and the whole, together with the fierce, quick expression, gave the same impression as if one suddenly saw a wild beast glaring through a bush. He was covered with an old, tattered, brown greatcoat, and had a belt round his waist, and

another over his shoulders. In the former were placed a pair of pistols; and the latter supported a knapsack, a large gourd in the shape of a bottle, and several other articles of a very miscellaneous description. He instantly paused on seeing a stranger; and Dudley, forgetting that his own appearance was little less wild and strange, raised his gun to his shoulder, exclaiming, "Halt, whoever you are!"

The man instantly advanced a step, crying, with a laugh, "Hale fellow, well met! Don't you see I'm not an officer?"

"I don't know," answered Dudley; "but you must halt nevertheless, till I know who you are. Another step, and I fire!"

The man paused, for he was out of the range of a pistol, but within that of a gun, otherwise it is probable a shot would have been the first reply.

"I tell you I am a poor devil like yourself," he replied, "who have got away from those incarnate fiends at Norfolk Island, have come over here, and taken to the bush. I am half-

starved, for I have fed upon raw parrots as long as I could get any, and have not had a morsel for these two days."

"That's another case," said Dudley, dropping his gun from his shoulder; "I can help you, and that's enough for me. I have got biscuit here; come and have some."

Short parleys and quick intercourse are common in the wilder parts of a colony, where every man, having even a glimmering of civilization, depends upon others many times each year for the few advantages of society he can ever obtain. Strange it is, that where the violence of barbarism is most strong, the charity of hospitality is most frank and ready. The stranger advanced at once, thrusting back the pistol he had half drawn from his belt, and taking Dudley's hand, he shook it warmly, saying, "You must be new to this place. Just arrived from Norfolk, I dare say. Come, give us some biscuit, man, for I am right down starved."

Dudley opened the bag, and the man thrust his hand in at once, drawing out two or three

biscuits, which he began to eat voraciously. "That's capital!" he said, adding a fearful oath. "After all, there's nothing like biscuit. Well, I'm glad you didn't fire, for I'd rather have this than lead in my stomach; and it would have cost me a shot in return, when, to say the truth, I haven't got one to spare, for I've got no powder but the charges in my pistols, and one of those I must save for Mac Sweeny. He may take two, perhaps, but I don't think it."

"And pray who is he?" asked Dudley.

"Oh, the man that betrayed me once!" replied his companion. "A storekeeper I trusted, and he sold me. He killed himself that night, and he knows it. So he's only waiting till I've got leisure—then we'll settle accounts."

"Then you mean you'll kill him," said Dudley, guessing the man's meaning, though not very certain.

"To be sure," answered the other. "He shall go out of the colony one day soon. Come, I must have another biscuit."

“As many as you like,” answered Dudley, “and take some with you, if you please; but if you’ve got any water in that bottle, you shall give me some, for I am as thirsty as you are hungry.”

“Ay, there’s water in it, sure enough, now,” replied the other, unslinging the gourd and giving it to him. “There was something better in it not long ago—real Bengal brandy, but that was gone a great deal too soon. Lord! it’s just like a dream; how I drank it up; but such as it is, you may have it.”

Dudley assuaged his thirst, and then returned the man the gourd, saying, “That is better than brandy, and, take my word for it, peace is better than revenge. Revenge is like that brandy you talk of, you take it to assuage a thirst, and it leaves a more consuming thirst than ever. From the moment you have had it, a burning will seize upon your heart, which nought will ever cool, and you will die parched up with crime upon crime, without peace in the present, peace in the past, or peace in the future.”

The man gazed at him with a look of utter astonishment. "No, I shan't," he replied. "I shall be hanged. That's my death. I always intended it."

"But did you ever consider," asked Dudley, "that this life is not all; that there is another beyond this world, to which the pains or the pleasures of this life are nothing?"

"Are you a methodist parson, young man?" said the other, knitting his brows at him.

"No," answered Dudley; "nothing of the kind. I am a plain man, as you are, but one who has learned to reverence the will of God; to think of the future as well as the present; and to remember in all my actions here that they have a reference to a hereafter, in comparison with which this life and all that it affords is a mere nothing."

"Then what the devil brought you here?" asked the other; and after an instant's pause, continued, "Well, I have heard of such things as you talk of, but it is all guess-work. No dead man ever came back to tell me what had happened to him after he was gone.—All I see

rots as soon as it's put in the ground, and the rest's but a chance, or an old woman's tale. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; so I'll have my will while I live, and risk all the rest."

"Did you ever think how much you risk?" asked Dudley, gravely. "Do you know Norfolk Island? Well, suppose for one moment, that all which man can be made to suffer there were increased a thousand fold, and carried on throughout eternity without the possibility of escape, even by death—remember, this is what you risk, and much more."

"Pooh! that's nonsense," answered the man. "No one could stand it. Why, sooner than stay there, I stood—one night when they had caught me, after I had got off, and had tied my hands with a strong rope—I stood, I say, with my back to the fire and my wrists to the flame, till the rope was burnt through—There are the marks," he continued, baring his seared and withered arms. "But let us talk of something else. If you are not a parson, you talk very like one, and I hate parsons. What were you convicted of?"

“ Of killing a man,” answered Dudley.

“ Ay, that was something worth while,” replied his companion. “ I thought it had been some larceny, or something like that, by the way you talked. But what do you intend to do now? You’ve run, of course, and that’s quite right; but it’s a hardish sort of life, especially out here. I’m half sorry I didn’t keep in t’other island; but they ran after me so sharply, that when I got a ship that would take me, which was a great chance—she was a whaler that sent her boat on shore—I thought it was not worth while to stay. Then I found they had got scent of me; and so I’ve walked six or seven hundred miles altogether, rather than go back to the d—d place. They would have put me in a chain gang directly, and I have seen such things there I don’t want to see any more. I dare say I know more of it than you do, for you seem a new hand. I’ll tell you what I saw once. I saw two men—they were in the same gang with myself—toss up with a brass halfpenny, which should knock the other’s brains out, and be hanged for it afterwards. The lot fell upon James Mills, and

he did it handsomely, for he finished the other fellow, whose name was Ezekiel Barclay, with one blow of his pick, and when he was hanged at Hobart Town, he told all the people how it had happened, and why he had done it; and many of them said, I have heard, that it was a great shame to drive men to such a pass—that it was better for one to have his skull smashed, and the other his neck twisted, than to live on slaving any longer.”

Dudley gave a shudder, so visible, that his hardened companion laughed aloud. “Wait a bit, and you will get accustomed to such things,” he said; “but you’ll find it more hard to get accustomed to living here. I’m beating up towards some more civilized place, I can tell you; I have had enough, and too much of this kind of life, and if I find I am to be caught, I’ll do something to be hanged for when they have caught me. It’s no use going on this way for ever—but how did you get this biscuit? You’ve got money, I guess.”

“Not a penny,” answered Dudley, with a smile. “A friend gave me these things to help me on.”

"A devilish kind friend," replied the man; "but they won't last long, and what will you do after? You're not up to half the tricks, I dare say, for living in the scrub; but I can teach you a thing or two, if you are going my way, for I must be jogging."

"I am going to the foot of those hills," replied Dudley, who felt somewhat anxious to make some impression on the man's mind, and turn him from the dreadful purpose he seemed to meditate. "If you like to come with me, I can give you a night's lodging."

The man grinned at him with a very peculiar laugh. "Are you not afraid?" he said. "Do you know I'm Jack Brady?"

"Not in the least," answered Dudley. "We are companions in misfortune, and you are not a man, I am sure, whatever you may do, either to wrong me or betray me."

"That's hearty," said the man, holding out his hand to him. "I would not betray you if you had killed my brother; and as to wronging you, no man can ever say I harmed him that trusted me."

"Well, I do trust you fully," replied Dud-

ley ; "I am quite sure of you, and my little store, such as it is, you shall share."

"Perhaps I can tell you things which may be of as much service to you," said the man ; "so come along, for it's getting late, and I reckon those hills are six miles off or more."

"That to the full," replied Dudley, rising. "I am ready ; let us go."

Perhaps he might not feel quite as sure as he said he was ; but, nevertheless, he reflected that they were but man to man, and life was not a thing so valuable in his eyes, to fear the hazard thereof, if he could do good.

"I'll carry your lantern," said the man, taking it up as he spoke. "Have you got any oil?"

"No," answered Dudley ; "it is that which puzzles me ; but I think I shall be able to get a seal upon the coast."

"Oh, you can manage better than that," said the other. "I'll show you half-a-dozen trees that you can get oil from, and some that have got a kind of fat, of which you can make candles. This is a precious place for vegetables. Nature has been kind to the place ; it's man's done all the mischief."

"It's the same everywhere," answered Dudley; "let us take care that we don't blame ourselves."

"There's truth enough in that," answered Brady; "but come along; you'll soon make a famous bushranger, for you'll forget how to preach, having nobody to preach to."

"It will do me very little good, my friend," replied Dudley, as they walked along, "to preach to you or to anybody, as I am neither paid, nor likely to be paid, for doing it; but, depend upon it, if there were more to preach, and more to hear, in our penal settlements, they would be happier places than they are. Good conduct towards our fellow-creatures, and reverence towards God, are the sources of all happiness on earth."

"I love my fellow-creatures well enough," said the man, "and would do anything to help them. No man can say I ever took a penny from a poor man, or injured a weak one. It is against my principles, sir, whatever you may think; but many who are here I do not look upon as men at all. They are devils in men's bodies, and nothing more. With them I am

at war, and ever will be; and if a man betrays me, that man dies if I live. There is no use talking about it, for my mind is made up."

He spoke in a stern, determined tone, and his face assumed an expression of demoniacal ferocity when he alluded to the fact of being betrayed; but it passed away in a moment or two; and, as if he sought no farther discussion on a subject in regard to which his resolution was taken, he began to look round amongst the trees and shrubs, and at length pointed out one to Dudley, saying, "There, you see those little berries—well, let them get ripe—they'll turn almost quite black in a week or two, and then, if you bruise them between two stones, and put them in a kettle over a little fire, you'll have oil enough for your purposes. There do not seem to be so many good sorts of trees and plants here, as on t'other side. Why, there, if it be not a very dry year, a man may live for many a month on what he finds growing wild. But you'll do very well here, too; and, I dare say, farther in, you may find the same sorts of shrubs as over by Port Philip. There's the

great, long, gum tree, and cypresses, I see, too ; but not so many as in New South Wales. It's a fine country, however, and I like it better, for there are too many men over there. Here there seems to be no one but you and I—at least, I have not seen a living soul but one, beside yourself, for three hundred miles or more."

"Is it not dangerous for a stranger, unacquainted with botany, to feed upon the fruits of a land totally new to him?" inquired Dudley.

"Oh dear, no!" answered Brady. "Those that have a stone in them you may always eat, and most of those that have a hard shell to them. I don't speak of beans, you know, for many of them are poisonous enough, I believe; but of nuts and such like. But I'll tell you what a man, whom I once knew, did, and it wasn't an unclever sort of trick, which, if you stay long here, you may practise too. He caught a young kangaroo when it was quite little, and bred it up to hop about his place like a dog that had lost its fore-legs. Well,

whatever he saw the kangaroo eat, he knew he might eat too, for they're a sort of human creatures, those kangaroos ; I never half liked shooting one in my life."

Dudley thought how strange that a man, who, for passion or revenge, would shed his fellow's blood like water, should feel repugnance to kill a mere brute, from a fancied resemblance to the human race. Yet such are the inconsistencies of our nature, and we meet with them every day.

"It's very good eating, though," continued his companion, "and I dare say, man's good eating enough too, at least I've heard one of those black fellows say so; but of all things that's the best in this country it's the wombat. I should think there must be a good number of them about here, for I've seen a great many of their holes."

"What is it like?" asked Dudley. "I never met with one."

"It's about the size of a badger, and in shape something like a large rat," replied Brady; "but when he's roasted, he's for all the world like a

young pig; you'd hardly know the difference if it wasn't he's not quite so fat. The first time you see a hole with fresh tracks going in, you dig the fellow out and roast him, and you'll thank me for as good a dinner as ever you had in your life. He bites foully, though, I can tell you, so take care of your hands."

"I must lay up some store of provisions for the winter," replied Dudley, "but how to preserve them I do not know, unless I dig a salt-pan by the sea."

"Pooh, nonsense!" answered the man, "you'll find plenty of salt-pans ready made. There's too much of that commodity about. I can't say it's very good, for there's mostly something bitter mixed with it, but one must not be dainty in these countries. If you look about, you'll find many a hole of twenty acres or more with the salt as hard upon the top as ice. And you have nothing to do but to cut yourself a little tank out of the coral limestone, and make a pickling-pan of it."

"That would be a laborious business, I'm

afraid," replied Dudley, "for which I have not proper tools."

"Lord bless you! you can cut it like cheese," replied the bushranger. "Then you've nothing to do but to let it stand out in the air for a little while, and it grows as hard as flint. Why, the man I was talking about that I saw between this and Adelaide has built himself quite a house of it, and all with his own hands."

As he spoke, they came to the top of a little rising ground, from which the land sloped away with very gentle undulations for five or six miles. Mount Shanek, with its truncated cone, and Mount Gambier, with its peaky summits, were both within sight; while to the eastward, over a wild extent of scrub, the blue tops of some distant hills were seen, and the ground below, between them and the foot of Gambier, was wonderfully and beautifully varied with wide spaces of rich green pasture, and manifold clumps and small woods of gigantic shadowy trees, the long shadows of which fell upon the verdant meadows as if thrown upon green velvet.

“Well, that’s mighty pretty!” cried the bush-ranger, as he and Dudley stopped to gaze; “it puts me in mind of England—doesn’t it you? It’s for all the world like some great gentleman’s park, isn’t it now? It’s a fine place that England, any how. I’ve never seen anything like it; d—n them for sending me out of it, I say.”

“What a vast variety of different kinds of vegetation!” said Dudley. “What are those dark, gloomy-looking trees there, to the eastward?”

“That’s what they call the tea-tree,” answered his companion; “bad enough tea it would make, however; and this one here, under which we are standing,—Heaven knows how high it is, for it seems as if it were looking after the clouds up there,—they call the stringy bark, and those just below us are the black-wood trees. Those fellows that you see out in the meadows with their little leaves all strung upon a stalk, they call mimosas here—I don’t know what their right name is; but what’s better than all, I see you’ve got lots of juniper

here—all those bushes that you see—and when their berries are ripe, if you could but get some molasses, or maize, or anything of that kind, and make a still out of an old kettle, you could brew yourself some capital gin, and be as merry as a king.”

“Without subjects,” said Dudley.

“All the merrier for that,” answered the bushranger. “I had never a fancy for pig-driving; and ruling a lot of men, every one of whom has his own fancy, must be as bad or worse. Well, it is a beautiful country, surely; and I think one might live very comfortably here, if it was not for that sort of roving spirit one gets. Perhaps one might turn better too, if the folks would but let one; but that’s impossible in this country. I was bad enough when I came here, but I’m ten times worse now, and shall be worse every day till I’m hanged.”

“Did you ever try to be better?” asked Dudley. “Depend upon it you would find it to your advantage.”

“It’s no use,” answered the man, “and that

you may find some day to your own cost. You've done quite right to come away to a place where there are no other white people but yourself; but they'll find you out here in time; and if I were to stay here, they would hunt me out soon enough, and have me down to a chain gang, and drive me madder than I am. My only safety is in moving about, and then it's difficult to track me. You might as well expect devils to get good as the people in this colony; for if they wanted, there are other devils put on purpose to prevent them. But let us talk about the place, and not the people. I hate that sort of thing."

During the latter part of this conversation they had descended slowly through the beautiful country before them, passing under various kinds of trees, with the evening chirp of the cicada spreading a melancholy murmur through the air, and multitudes of black and white cockatoos whirling round in the air, and parrots of every kind and colour moving about amongst the branches. From amongst the long thick grass at the foot of the descent a

tall emu started up, and galloped away upon its long legs across the plains. Every now and then they came upon a thicket covered with beautiful flowers, and they found the bank of a little stream gemmed with the Murray lily, and clothed in different places with a shrub bearing small purple bells. The ice-plant, too, was seen here and there ; and had but the mind been at ease, few things more delightful could be found on earth than a ramble through that lovely scene. The spirit of peace and bounty seemed to pervade it all, and a forcible line of a rash but beautiful poet recurred to Dudley's mind—

“ And all but the image of God is divine.”

Nevertheless, the impression of all that beauty and the calm spirit which it seemed to give forth, was not without effect even upon his rude companion. He walked on in silence for some way, gazing around him on every side, and at length he said—

“ I believe one does not half know how beautiful the country is when one's living in

towns. I often think it would be better if people didn't live in towns at all, for you see one gets to like all sorts of things one doesn't care for in the country."

"Doubtless there are many more temptations in towns," replied Dudley; "and what is worse than all, less opportunity for a man to commune quietly with his own thoughts; for I am quite sure, that if a person did so always, before he acts, there would not be half the harm done that takes place in the world. The opportunity of doing so is a great blessing, and the habit of so doing a greater blessing still."

"I'm not quite sure that that's the right cause of mischief," answered the bushranger. "Men seldom do things all at once. It's bit by bit a man gets on. If a man goes into a house and takes a glass of gin or brandy, as the case may be, it is not to get drunk, and he'd most likely do the same if he'd an hour to think of it. It is just to keep his spirits up when they're inclined to get low; then he finds a friend there, and he takes another glass; and then, while they are talking, another, till glass

after glass goes into his mouth, and then to his head, and then nobody knows what happens. It's the same with other things too. It's all bit by bit—besides, I believe the devil is in some people—in me, perhaps. I dare say you think so. Now, there are the savage people here—the natives, as they call them; if the devil isn't in them, I don't know what is. They've never had any teaching, and yet they'll do such things as you've no notion of. I've seen them pick a man's pocket with their toes as cleverly as any prig in all London with his hands; and they'll throw those long spears of theirs right into your back, at such a distance that you'd think they couldn't hit a mountain. Then, as for their devilish tricks, they'll kill a man for his fat just as the settlers do a bullock for its tallow, and smear themselves all over with it, and then put red ochre on the top of that. You must keep a sharp look out for them, for there's no trusting them, and there's a whole heap of them not far from here, especially the people they call the Milmenduras, great, tall fellows, with curly hair; and there are the

Fatayaries, too, but I don't think they're so bad as the others. I saw some of their wirlies as I came along. They're terrible savages, to be sure, and the only way to keep clear of them is to make them think that you're what they call a 'Mooldthorpe,' a sort of devil—that's what they think of me, and they don't touch me."

"I would rather make them think me an angel of good than an angel of evil," answered Dudley.

The man laughed aloud. "They'd kill ye, and eat ye, for all that," he answered. "They think, what the officers fancy we think, that it's only worth while minding those who torment or punish us. They care nothing about spirits of good. It's the spirits of evil they care about—look there, there's one of them looking out now by that little wood! Let's keep clear of his spear—no, it's a kangaroo, upon my life. See how he goes hopping off, thirty foot at a jump, and yet sometimes the wild dogs will catch them, jump as wide as they will, as those dogs in the colony will catch me before I've done, let me roam far or near. I know it's my

luck, and so I may as well have my will for a while."

This was not exactly the sort of conclusion to which Dudley had hoped to lead him. He thought he discovered some small portion of good amidst the great mass of evil in the man's nature; but he knew not how difficult it is to eradicate weeds which have grown up, year after year, even in a soil which might have been made at one time prolific of other things. Neither had he sufficient experience of such characters to be aware of the best means of planting better thoughts. Whenever he attempted to do so, his companion flew away from the subject, resolved not to hear, and they had reached the foot of Mount Gambier without the least progress having been made. As Dudley began to climb the hill, however, the bushranger exclaimed, "Why, you don't live up there, do you?"

"Yes, indeed I do, at the very top," replied Dudley.

"Oh! then hang me if I go any farther," answered Brady. "I'm tired, and getting

sleepy, and I don't want to add a great bit to my walk off to-morrow. It's full forty miles to Mr. Norries's place, where I intend to sleep. The day after, I dare say I can steal a horse. There's one, I know, at Pringle's sheep farm, and that'll carry me into the bush near Adelaide. It'll be three weeks before I reach it, I dare say, so if you'll give me a day or two's biseuit, I'll thank you."

"With all my heart," answered Dudley, who had by this time given up all hope of making an impression on his companion. "You had better take a good stock, as you've such a long way to go."

"No," answered Brady, "there's no use a-lumbering one's self. I'll have a dozen; that's enough for three days, at four a day, and before I've eaten them, perhaps I may be as dead as a sheep; besides, Mr. Norries will feed me to-morrow, and I'll make Pringle feed me the day after."

"And who is this Mr. Norries?" asked Dudley, somewhat struck by the name. "Is he a runaway convict, like ourselves?"

“He’s a convict, sure enough,” answered Brady; “but at the end of the first year, he got indulgence, as they call it, for good behaviour and helping the governor’s secretary at a pinch. Besides, though he’s condemned for life, what he did wasn’t very bad after all. He was a sort of lawyer, you see, and got into a terrible row, as what they call a Chartist. Devil take me if I know rightly what that means; there were no Chartists in England when I set out on my travels. But, however, he was cast, and sent out to Hobart Town, which he reached just as I started off, a good many months ago. I recollect hearing they were all very civil to him, for they do make distinctions out here, let them say what they will.”

Dudley listened with eager attention, hesitating not a little as to how he should act in consequence of the unexpected information he had just received. A thirst for some companionship was upon him. To know that a well-educated and intelligent, though misguided man, was within what seemed, in that wild and

thinly-peopled tract, but a short distance, gave him a strong desire to open some communication with him, and curiosity as to many events in the past rendered that desire almost irresistible. Yet he doubted and feared, for the idea of being betrayed and carried back to the bondage from which he escaped, was terrible to him. After much hesitation, then, he sent a brief and not very distinct message to Norries by his lawless companion, proposing to watch all the better against surprise thenceforward. "Tell Mr. Norries," he said, "that there is a person living here who knew something of him in former days, and whom he last saw about the time when he was planning those schemes which turned out so ill."

"You would not like to tell your name, I suppose?" asked Brady.

"No, that is not necessary," replied Dudley. "If he guesses, well; if not, it does not matter."

"Well, I think you must give me a couple of charges of powder for my pains," replied the bushranger.

"Willingly," replied Dudley, "and some

small-shot too. I have no bullets with me but what are in the gun."

"That'll do—that'll do," was the reply. And having received the gift, the wild and lawless man shook hands with his unfortunate companion, and saying that he should look out for some low tree to sleep in, he left him to pursue his way towards his solitary dwelling on the mountain-top.

END OF VOL. II.

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